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# THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION





# THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION

Edited by  
ANDREW ROTHSTEIN



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## INTRODUCTION

THE Soviet Constitution of July, 1918, was the first attempt to express in a legislative code the political meaning of the Russian Workers' Revolution of November, 1917. More than this, in its abandonment at once of the property idea as the qualification for citizenship and its transformation, in the light, of class relations, of the general democratic formulæ introduced into political theory by the writers of the French Revolution, it was an entirely novel contribution to the history of the established forms of human society.

For these reasons it aroused the most intense interest of all classes in other countries. The industrial and agricultural proletariat on the one hand, the owners and administrators of capital on the other, approaching its main ideas from diametrically opposite standpoints, could not but find its principles and provisions of engrossing interest. Students of political science discovered that another link had been added to the ever-growing constitutional chain which had followed in the train of the changing modes of production, and consequent relations of classes, from the Greek city-state to the great capitalist empires of the twentieth century.

A number of versions of the Constitution appeared in English during the first twelve months after its adoption; but for various reasons none could be considered an adequate and definite edition. This we have attempted to give in the first part of the present volume.

What distinguished the Constitution of July, 1918, from all similar enactments that followed successful social upheavals in previous history, was that it was not framed in

accordance with preconceived notions of abstract principles. It summed up the general experience of twelve months' working of the workers' and peasants' Soviets throughout the country; its underlying principles were those suggested by the facts of real life, and could be tested and verified any day by any rank-and-file worker in the Republic. With such a beginning, consequently, it is natural that every succeeding Congress of Soviets, summing up and generalising from the practical experience of the previous half year or year, should introduce the amendments and additions which the reader will find in this volume, brought up to date. The written Soviet Constitution is not the product of a lecture room or study; it is as living and elastic an organism, capable of expanding and contracting or altering according to the lessons drawn by the Russian workers from their everyday experience, as any other of the institutions or organisations which helped them to victory during the four years of civil war and blockade.

In the concluding short studies of the most important sections of the Soviet apparatus, as it existed at the beginning of 1922, we have attempted to trace the working out of the written Constitution in its application to existing conditions, not attempting to conceal defects. The series will help more fully to illustrate the broad principle running through the whole of the government machinery built up by the Russian proletariat—namely, that the administrative organisation exists, not for the purpose of satisfying pedants or bureaucrats, but in order to minister to the daily requirements of the masses, whose life and development it reflects in faithful miniature. Most of the articles appeared in the first volume of *Russian Information and Review*.

PART, I  
THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION  
(*July*, 1918)





# CONSTITUTION

(FUNDAMENTAL LAW)

OF THE

## RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERAL SOVIET REPUBLIC

DECREE OF THE FIFTH ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS  
ADOPTED ON JULY 10, 1918

### INTRODUCTION

The Declaration of Rights of the Labouring and Exploited Masses, confirmed by the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets in January, 1918, together with the Constitution of the Soviet Republic, ratified by the Fifth All-Russian Congress, are the Fundamental Law of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

This Fundamental Law becomes operative from the moment of its publication, in its final form, in the *Izvestia* (official gazette) of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. It shall be reprinted in all the local organs of the Soviets, and displayed prominently in all public Soviet institutions.

The Fifth All-Russian Congress instructs the People's Commissariat for Education to introduce into all schools and educational institutions, without exception, the study of the basic principles of this Constitution, as well as their explanation and interpretation.

### DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE LABOUR- *Part I* ING AND EXPLOITED MASSES

Russia is declared a Republic of Soviets of Workers', *Chap. I* Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All central and local authority is vested in these Soviets.

- 2 The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of national Soviet Republics.

*Chap. II* 11 With the fundamental aim of suppressing all exploitation

- 3 of man by man, of abolishing for ever the division of society into classes, of ruthlessly suppressing all exploiters, of bringing about the Socialist organisation of society, and of establishing the triumph of Socialism in all countries, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets further decrees:—

(a) In order to establish the socialisation of land, private ownership of land is abolished; all land is declared national property, and is handed over to the workers, without compensation, on the basis of an equitable division carrying with it the right of use only.

(b) All forests, underground mineral wealth, and waters of national importance, all live stock and appurtenances, together with all model-farms and agricultural concerns, are declared public property.

(c) As a first step towards the complete transfer to the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic of all factories, workshops, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport, and in order to ensure the supremacy of the workers over the exploiters, the Congress ratifies the Soviet law on workers' control of industry and that on the Supreme Economic Council.

(d) The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets regards the law repudiating the debts contracted by the government of the Tsar, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie as a first blow at international financial capitalism; and it expresses its entire confidence that the Soviet Government will continue firmly in this direction, until the international revolt of

the workers against the yoke of capitalism shall have secured a complete victory.

(e) The Congress ratifies the transfer of all banks to the Workers' and Peasants' Government, as one of the conditions ensuring the emancipation of the toiling masses from the yoke of capitalism.

(f) In order to exterminate all parasitic elements of society, and to organise the economic life of the country, work useful to the community shall be obligatory upon all.

(g) In order to secure the supremacy of the labouring masses, and to guard against any possibility of the exploiters regaining power, the Congress decrees the arming of the workers, the formation of a Socialist Red Army of workers and peasants, and the complete disarmament of the propertied classes.

Expressing its firm determination to deliver humanity from the grip of financial capital and imperialism, which during this, the most criminal of wars, have drenched the world with blood, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets wholeheartedly associates itself with the policy of the present Soviet administration in its repudiation of the secret treaties, in its organisation of the widest possible fraternising between the workers and peasants in the ranks of the opposing armies, and in its efforts to attain at all costs a democratic workers' peace, secured by revolutionary means—a peace without annexations or indemnities, on the basis of the free self-determination of nations.

With the same object, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets insists on the complete repudiation of the barbarous policy of capitalist civilisation, which built up the prosperity of the exploiters in a few privileged nations on

the enslavement of millions of labourers in Asia, in the colonies, and in the small nations.

- 6 The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets cordially approves the action of the Council of People's Commissaries in proclaiming the independence of Finland; in beginning the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia, and in granting to Armenia full self-determination.

*Chap. IV* The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers',

- 7 Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies considers that now; at the decisive moment in the struggle between the workers and their exploiters, there can be no place for the latter on any organ of government. Power must belong completely and exclusively to the labouring masses and to their true representative bodies—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.

- 8 At the same time, striving to bring about the really free and voluntary, and, therefore, the complete and lasting union of the working classes of all the various nationalities of Russia, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets confines itself to formulating the main principles of the federation of the Soviet Republics of Russia, leaving to the workers and peasants of each nationality the right to decide freely, at their own national Congress of Soviets, whether they desire, and upon what basis they desire, to participate in the Federal Government and in other federal Soviet institutions.

# GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERAL SOVIET REPUBLIC *Part II*

The principal object of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, a Constitution for the present period of transition, consists in the establishment (in the form of a strong Soviet Government) of the dictatorship of the urban and rural workers, combined with the poorer peasantry, to secure the complete suppression of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, and the establishment of Socialism, under which neither class divisions nor State coercion arising therefrom will any longer exist. *Chap: v*

The Russian Republic is a free Socialist community of all the workers of Russia. All authority within the Russian Republic is vested in the entire working population of the country, organised in the urban and rural Soviets. 10

The Soviets of regions with special usages and national characteristics of their own may unite in autonomous regional unions, governed (like all other regional unions which may be formed) by regional Congresses of Soviets and their executive organs. These autonomous regional unions enter into the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic on a federal basis. 11

Supreme authority in the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic is vested in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and, during the period between the Congresses, in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets. To ensure for the workers genuine liberty of conscience, the Church is separated from the State and the school from the Church; and freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda is assured to every citizen. 12, 13

- 14 To ensure for the workers effective liberty of opinion, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic puts an end to the dependence of the Press upon capital; transfers to the working class and to the peasants all the technical and material resources necessary for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books, and other printed matter; and guarantees their unobstructed circulation throughout the country.
- 15 To ensure for the workers complete freedom of meeting, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, recognising the right of its citizens freely to organise meetings, processions, and so on, places at the disposal of the workers and peasants all premises convenient for public gatherings, together with lighting, heating, and furniture.
- 16 To ensure for the workers full liberty of association, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, which has destroyed the economic and political power of the propertied classes, and has thus removed the obstacles which hitherto in capitalist society prevented the workers and peasants from enjoying freedom of association and action, lends to the workers and peasants all its material and moral assistance to help them to unite and to organise themselves.
- 17 To ensure for the workers effective access to education, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic sets before itself the task of providing for the workers and poorer peasants a complete, universal, and free education.
- 18 The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic proclaims it the duty of all citizens to work, on the principle "He that does not work, neither shall he eat."
- 19 To safeguard in every possible way the conquests of the great workers' and peasants' revolution, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic declares it the duty of all

its citizens to defend the Socialist fatherland, and establishes universal military service. The honour of bearing arms in defence of the revolution is granted only to the workers. The leisured sections of the population will fulfil other military duties.

Recognising the solidarity of the workers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic extends all political rights enjoyed by Russian citizens to foreigners working within the territory of the Russian Republic, provided that they belong to the working class or to the peasantry working without hired labour. It authorises the local Soviets to confer upon such foreigners, without any annoying formalities, the rights of Russian citizenship. The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic grants the right of asylum to all foreigners persecuted for political and religious offences.

The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, recognising the equality of all citizens before the law, irrespective of race or nationality, declares it contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic to institute or tolerate privileges, or any prerogative whatsoever, founded on such grounds, or to repress national minorities, or in any way to limit their rights.

In the general interest of the working class, the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic deprives individuals and sections of the community of any privileges which may be used by them to the detriment of the Socialist revolution.



### *Part III(a)* THE ORGANISATION OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY

#### THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS', AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES

*Chap. vi.* The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is the supreme  
24 authority of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

- 25 The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is composed of representatives of town Soviets, on the basis of one deputy for every 25,000 electors, and representatives of provincial congresses of Soviets, on the basis of one deputy for every 125,000 inhabitants.

NOTE 1. If a provincial congress of Soviets has not been held before the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, delegates to the latter are sent direct from the county congresses of Soviets.

NOTE 2. If a regional congress of Soviets immediately precedes the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, delegates to the latter may be sent by the regional congress.

- 26 The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is convened by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets at least twice a year.
- 27 An extraordinary All-Russian Congress may be convened by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, either on its own initiative, or at the demand of local Soviets representing in the aggregate at least one-third of the total population of the Republic.
- 28 The All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, consisting of not more than 200 members.
- 29 The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is responsible in all matters to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.
- 30 In the period between the Congresses, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the supreme authority of the Republic.

## THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the *Chap. VII*  
supreme legislative, administrative, and controlling body 31  
of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee has the 32  
general direction of the Workers' and Peasants' Govern-  
ment and all government organs throughout the country;  
unifies and co-ordinates legislative and administrative  
work; and superintends the application of the Soviet Con-  
stitution, the decrees of the All-Russian Congresses of  
Soviets, and the decisions of the central organs of govern-  
ment.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee examines 33  
and ratifies drafts of decrees and other proposals sub-  
mitted by the Council of People's Commissaries or in-  
dividual departments; it also issues its own decrees and  
regulations.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee convenes 34  
the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, to which it submits a  
report of its work, together with statements on general  
policy and on various detailed questions.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee appoints 35  
the Council of People's Commissaries for the general  
direction of the affairs of the Russian Socialist Federal  
Soviet Republic; it also appoints the various departments  
(People's Commissariats), which direct the various  
branches of administration.

The members of the All-Russian Central Executive Com- 3  
mittee themselves work in the departments (People's  
Commissariats), or undertake special work for the All-  
Russian Central Executive Committee.

## THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIES

Chap. VIII With the Council of People's Commissaries rests the  
37 general direction of the affairs of the Republic.

38 With this object, the Council of People's Commissaries  
issues decrees, orders, and instructions; and takes all  
general measures necessary to secure prompt and orderly  
administration.

39 The Council of People's Commissaries immediately in-  
forms the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of all  
its orders and decisions.

40 The All-Russian Central Executive Committee has the  
right to annul or suspend any decision or order of the  
Council of People's Commissaries.

41 All decisions of the Council of People's Commissaries  
of general political importance are submitted to be ex-  
amined and ratified by the Central Executive Committee.

NOTE. Measures of extreme urgency may be enforced on the sole  
authority of the Council of People's Commissaries.

42 The members of the Council of People's Commissaries  
are in charge of the various People's Commissariats.

43 There are eighteen People's Commissariats, viz., Foreign  
Affairs, War, Marine, Home Affairs, Justice, Labour,  
Social Welfare, Education, Posts and Telegraphs, Nation-  
alities, Finance, Transport, Agriculture, Foreign Trade,  
Food, State Control, Supreme Economic Council, Health.

44 Attached to each People's Commissary, and under his  
presidency, is a Board, the members of which are con-  
firmed in their appointments by the Council of People's  
Commissaries.

45 The People's Commissary has the power personally to  
make decisions on all questions within the scope of his  
department, informing his Board on the subject. Should

the Board disagree with any decision of the People's Commissary, it has the right, without stopping the execution of the decision, to bring the question before the Council of People's Commissaries or the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. This right of appeal belongs to every member of the Board.

The Council of People's Commissaries is responsible to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. 46

The People's Commissaries and their Boards are responsible to the Council of People's Commissaries and to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. 47

The title of People's Commissary belongs exclusively to the members of the Council of People's Commissaries, controlling the general business of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, and no other representative of central or local powers may adopt it. 48

#### THE COMPETENCE OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS AND OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Within the competence of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee fall all questions of national importance, namely:— *Chap. IX* 49

- (a) The ratification, alteration, and supplementing of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R.
- (b) The general direction of the external and internal policy of the R.S.F.S.R.
- (c) The determination and alteration of frontiers, with power to detach any territories of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, or to abandon the rights of the Republic in respect thereof.

- (d) The establishment of the boundaries and competence of regional unions of Soviets which are part of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, and arbitration in disputes which may arise amongst them.
- (e) The admittance of new members into the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, and the recognition of the severance of those parts which have left the Russian Federation.
- (f) The determination of the administrative divisions of the territory of the Republic, and the ratification of regional groupings.
- (g) The establishment and modification of the systems of weights, measures, and coinage.
- (h) Relations with foreign powers, declaration of war and conclusion of peace.
- (i) The floating of loans, the negotiation of tariff, commercial and financial agreements.
- (j) The establishment of a basis and general outlines for the economic life, both as a whole and in its separate branches, of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.
- (k) The adoption of the budget of the R.S.F.S.R.
- (l) The levying of taxes and imposition of public duties.
- (m) The organisation of the armed forces of the Republic.
- (n) Legislation, the organisation of the judicature, of criminal and civil jurisdiction.
- (o) The appointment of and recall of both the individual members of, and of the entire, Council of People's Commissaries, and the confirmation of the appointment of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries.
- (p) The publication of general regulations concerning the acquisition or loss of civic rights by Russian citizens,

and also the rights of foreigners within the territory of the Republic.

(g) The granting of total or partial amnesties.

In addition to the questions enumerated, the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee may decide on any other matter which they deem within their jurisdiction. 50

The All-Russian Congress has as its special and exclusive prerogative:— 51

(a) The power of establishing, supplementing and modifying the fundamental elements of the Soviet Constitution.

(b) The ratification of peace treaties.

Questions coming within the scope of clauses (c) and (h) of Article 49 may be dealt with by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee only when it is impossible to convene the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. 52

## THE ORGANISATION OF LOCAL SOVIET AUTHORITY *Part III(b)*

### CONGRESSES OF SOVIETS

The Congresses of Soviets are composed as follows:— *Chap. x*

(a) Regional (Oblast) Congresses. These are composed of representatives of town Soviets and of county congresses; in the case of the latter, in the proportion of one deputy for every 25,000 inhabitants, and in the case of the former, in the proportion of one deputy for every 5,000 electors, with a maximum of 500 deputies for the whole region. They may also be composed of deputies to the provincial congresses of Soviets, elected in the same proportion, if the latter congresses are held immediately before the regional congress. 53

(b) Provincial (Gubernia) Congresses. These consist of

representatives of the town Soviets and the rural district congresses of Soviets; in the proportion of one deputy for every 10,000 inhabitants in the case of the latter, and in the proportion of one deputy for every 2,000 electors, in the case of the former, with a maximum of 300 deputies for the whole province. If the county congresses of Soviets be held immediately before the provincial congress, the election takes place on the same principle, not by the rural district congresses, but by the county congresses.

(c) County (Uyezd) Congresses. These are composed of representatives of the village Soviets, in the proportion of one deputy for every 1,000 inhabitants, with a maximum of 300 deputies for the county.

(d) Rural District (Volost) Congresses. These are composed of representatives of all the village Soviets of the rural districts, in the proportion of one deputy for every ten members of the Soviet.

NOTE 1. In the county congresses are represented the Soviets of towns of not more than 10,000 inhabitants. Soviets of villages of less than 1,000 inhabitants meet together to elect delegates to the county congress.

NOTE 2. Village Soviets of less than ten members send one delegate to the rural district congress.

54 The Soviet congresses are convened by the executive organs of Soviet authority; that is to say, the executive committees, either upon their own initiative or at the demand of local Soviets, if these represent at least a third of the population of the locality. In any case, regional congresses must be held not less than twice a year, provincial and county congresses at least once in three months, and rural district congresses at least once a month.

55 Every congress of Soviets (regional, provincial, county, rural district) elects its own executive committee, with a

membership not greater than (a) for regions and provinces, 25; (b) for counties, 20; and (c) for rural districts, 10. The executive committee is responsible to the congress by which it was elected.

Within the limits of its administration, every congress of Soviets (regional, provincial, county, rural district) is the supreme authority within its own territory; between the congresses its authority is vested in its executive committee. 56

#### COUNCILS OF DEPUTIES (SOVIETS) •

Councils of deputies (Soviets) are elected as follows: Chap. XI

(a) In towns—in the proportion of one deputy for every 1,000 inhabitants, with a minimum of fifty and a maximum of 1,000 members. 57

(b) In the country (farms, hamlets, villages, encampments, small towns with a population of less than 10,000, mountain valleys)—in the proportion of one deputy for every 100 inhabitants, with a minimum of three and a maximum of fifty members for each locality. Deputies are elected for a period of three months.

NOTE. In rural localities, wherever this is possible, questions of administration will be directly decided by the general assembly of the electors of the village concerned.

For the transaction of current affairs, the Soviet elects an executive committee, composed of not more than five members in the villages, and in the towns with a minimum of three and a maximum of fifteen. (In Petrograd and Moscow, the maximum is forty). The executive committee is entirely responsible to the Soviet by which it was elected. 58

The Soviet is convened by the executive committee on the initiative of the latter, or at the demand of at least half the 59



(e) Agents and employees of the former police, special corps of gendarmerie and secret service; and also members of the late ruling dynasty of Russia.

(f) Persons legally recognised as mentally deranged or imbecile; together with those under wardship.

(g) Persons convicted of infamous or mercenary crimes, during a period fixed by law or by the sentence of the court.

#### ELECTORAL PROCEDURE

*Chap. xiv* Elections are conducted according to established practice,  
66 on dates fixed by the local Soviet.

67 Elections take place in the presence of an electoral commission and a representative of the local Soviet.

68 Where the presence of a representative of the local Soviet is impossible, his place is taken by the chairman of the electoral commission, and, in his absence, by the chairman of the electoral assembly.

69 A minute is drawn up of the proceedings of the election and of the result of the poll. This is signed by the members of the electoral commission and by the representative of the local Soviet.

70 Details of electoral procedure, and the participation of trade union and other labour organisations, are fixed by the local Soviets, in conformity with instructions issued by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

#### VERIFICATION AND ANNULMENT OF ELECTIONS, AND RECALL OF DELEGATES

*Chap. xv* All documents connected with an election are handed over  
71 to the Soviet concerned.

The electoral results are checked by a credentials commission appointed by the Soviet.	72
This commission reports to the Soviet the result of its inquiry.	73
The Soviet decides as to the validity of a deputy's mandate in the case of a dispute.	74
In the event of the invalidation of any election, the Soviet orders a new election.	75
If the election as a whole is irregular, the question of its annulment is decided by the Soviet immediately superior.	76
The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the final court of appeal.	77
The electors have the right at any time to recall the delegates whom they have sent to the Soviet, and to proceed to new elections.	78

## THE NATIONAL BUDGET

*Part V*

The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, during the present transitional period of the proletarian dictatorship, adopts a financial policy auxiliary to its fundamental aim of the expropriation of the capitalists and the creation of conditions which will secure the equality of all the citizens of the Republic in the production and distribution of wealth. To this end it aims at placing at the disposal of the organs of Soviet authority all the resources necessary to satisfy the local and national requirements of the Soviet Republic, encroaching without hesitation upon the rights of private property.	<i>Chap. xvi</i> 79
The revenue and the expenditure of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic are embodied in a national budget.	80
The All-Russian Congress of Soviets, or the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, assesses taxation, determines the sources of public revenue, and allocates its distribution between the State and the local Soviets.	81

- 82 The Soviets can only impose taxation for purely local needs; needs of a general and national character are met by grants from the State Treasury.
- 83 No expenditure may be made of money from the funds of the State Treasury without an authorised credit in respect thereof in the State estimates, or a special order of the central authority.
- 84 Credits with the State Treasury, required for purposes of national importance, are opened to local Soviets by order of the appropriate People's Commissary.
- 85 All credits granted by the State Treasury to the Soviets, as well as those allocated by local estimates for purely local requirements, must be expended directly and according to the programme, by paragraphs and clauses, laid down in the estimates; and they cannot be diverted to any other purpose without a special decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee or the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 86 The local Soviets prepare half-yearly and yearly estimates for local needs. The estimates of village Soviets, the rural district executive committees, and of those town Soviets which participate in the county congresses, together with the estimates of the county Soviet authorities, are ratified by the respective provincial and regional congresses, or the executive committees of the latter. The estimates of the town, provincial, and regional Soviet authorities are ratified by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 87 For expenditure not provided for in the estimates, and in cases where the sum allocated by the estimates is insufficient, the Soviets apply for supplementary credits to the appropriate People's Commissariats.

Should local resources prove insufficient for local needs, 88  
subsidies or loans from the State Treasury to the local  
Soviets to cover urgent expenditure are authorised by the  
All-Russian Executive Committee and by the Council of  
People's Commissaries.

## THE ARMS AND FLAG OF THE RUSSIAN *Part VI* SOCIALIST FEDERAL SOVIET REPUBLIC

The arms of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic *Chap. xvii*  
consist of a sickle and a hammer, gold upon a red field and in 89  
the rays of the sun, the handles crossed and turned down-  
wards: the whole surrounded by a wreath of ears of corn,  
with the inscription:—

(a) "RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERAL SOVIET REPUBLIC," and

(b) "WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!"

The commercial, naval, and military flag of the Russian 90  
Socialist Federal Soviet Republic consists of red (scarlet)  
material, on the upper corner of which, near the staff, are  
the letters in gold—"R.S.F.S.R."—or the inscription—  
"Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic."

*Signed:—The Chairman of the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets,  
and of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee:—*

J. SVERDLOV

*Members of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Com-  
mittee:—*

T. I. TEODOROVICH

F. A. ROZIN

A. P. ROSENHOLZ

A. H. MITROFANOV

K. G. MAXIMOV

*The Secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee:—*

V. AVANESSOV

*Published in No. 151 of the "Izvestia" of the All-Russian  
Central Executive Committee, July 19, 1918.*



PART II  
AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS  
1918-1921



## STANDING ORDERS

### OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS, PEASANTS, COSSACK AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES

- 1 The All-Russian Central Executive Committee meets in regular sessions.
- 2 The date of sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is fixed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
- 3 In cases of emergency, sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee can be convened either by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, or at the suggestion of the Council of People's Commissaries, or at the demand of one-third of the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
- 4 In the case of the summoning of an extraordinary session by the Presidium, members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are informed thereof, as well as of the agenda of the session, through their party whips, and by public announcement.
- 5 The agenda of sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is prepared by the Presidium at least a fortnight before the sessions, and is announced in the *Izvestia* of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
- 6 The Secretariat of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee sends to the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, as far as possible, all materials relative to the agenda of the session.



7 The Secretariat of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, or specially-appointed members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, have the charge of summoning all commissions which may be formed by the Presiding Council, and of their organisation.

8 A quorum of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee exists when at least one hundred members are present.

#### STANDING ORDERS OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS

9 It is the duty of all members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to be at the session at the appointed time.

10 Every proposal or request for permission to speak must be made in writing.

11 Reporters and co-reporters are given for their statement not more than 45 minutes. Groups numbering at least fifty members may put forward a co-reporter.

12 For their concluding speech, reporters are given 20 minutes.

13 Speakers representing parties are given not more than 15 minutes.

14 Speakers may address the meeting on the same question not more than twice, being granted 10 minutes on the first occasion and 5 minutes on the second.

15 For speeches in support of amendments, declarations, etc., the time allowed is 3 minutes, but not more than once for each item on the agenda.

16 All resolutions, amendments, and additions must in every case be submitted in writing.

17 Where resolutions are proposed, speeches are allowed, one in support of the resolution and one against it, of not more than 3 minutes each.

18 For declarations as to the motives of voting, speeches, of not more than 3 minutes, are allowed, after the voting, only to representatives of parties.

19 For personal statements 3 minutes are allowed at the end of the meeting.

20 Declarations are submitted in writing to the Presidium, which fixes the order of their reading. No discussions on such declarations are allowed.

#### VOTING

21 All questions are decided by open voting and by a simple majority of votes.

22 Voting by roll-call takes place on an application in writing being made by not less than thirty members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

#### REGULATIONS CONCERNING MEMBERS OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

23 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee may not be arrested without the consent of the Presidium or the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

24 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are committed for trial only on the decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee or of its Presidium.

25 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee may not refuse to execute any task entrusted to them by the Presidium.

26 All members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee must attend all the meetings of the All-Russian

Central Executive Committee, and of its departments and commissions in which they work.

NOTE. In the case of members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee not being able to attend the meetings, they must inform the chairman or the secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the fact.

27 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee who have failed to attend three meetings in succession, without showing justifiable reasons for their absence, are considered to have forfeited their membership of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

28 Retired members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are replaced by reserve members.

29 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee absent from any session are replaced by reserve members for the duration of the session.

30 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, when sent on special missions by the Presidium, are given a corresponding mandate, and must, immediately on their return, submit a report on their mission.

31 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee may act in the name of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee only when authorised to that effect by the Presidium.

32 All members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, of whatever nature their work, receive salary only from the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, at the rate existing for members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. Receipt of additional salary is forbidden.

33 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee sent on a mission by orders of the Presidium of the

All-Russian Central Executive Committee are allowed free travelling on the railways.

NOTE. Travelling expenses are paid by the Presidium. Telegrams sent by members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to the address of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are accepted by the Post Office free of charge, and are paid for by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in the usual way.

34 Members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee have the right of taking part, in a consultative capacity, in the proceedings of local Soviet institutions..

35 All members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee have the right of admission to all Soviet institutions of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, on their producing their mandates, and have the right of obtaining all the information they require except secret data of the war department.

36 Members of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are immediately admitted to all Soviet institutions of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, without exception, on production of their mandates, no special passes issued by the institution in question being necessary.

#### GENERAL RULES

37 All decrees and reports intended for the consideration of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are first of all submitted to the Presidium for its own information and for inclusion in the agenda notices of the session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. Answers to interpellations must be given not later than at the regular session following that at which the interpellation was made.

38 All materials, resolutions, decrees, etc., submitted for the consideration of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are supplied to all members of the All-Russian

Central Executive Committee for their information, as far as possible not later than two weeks before the opening of the session.

39 All members who have spoken at a session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee receive a stenographic report of their speech on the following day, and are obliged to return the same corrected within three days.

40 All inaccuracies noticed in the minutes, as well as any corrections, must be communicated in writing to the Secretariat of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee within two days after the receipt of the minutes.

Signed: The Chairman of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee.

M. KALININ

The Secretary of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee.

A. ENUKIDZE

*December 17, 1919*

## Soviet Organisation

### THE PRESIDIUM OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee directs the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; 1
- Prepares materials for the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; 2
- Submits drafts of decrees for the consideration of the plenary session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; 3
- Supervises the execution of the decisions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; 4
- Conducts relations on behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; 5
- Acts as the directing centre for instruction in all the work both of the central and of the local institutions; 6
- Considers applications for pardon, ratifies decoration with the Order of the Red Banner, and gives administrative decisions on other questions. 7
- Between the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Presidium has the right of ratifying the decisions of the Council of People's Commissaries, as well as of suspending the execution of such decisions, postponing them for reconsideration by the next plenary session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The Presidium appoints individual People's Commissaries on the recommendation of the Council of People's Commissaries. 8

### THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE II

The sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee are convoked every two months by the Presidium

of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The extraordinary meetings are convoked on the initiative of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, at the suggestion of the Council of People's Commissaries, or at the demand of one-third of the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

#### CONGRESSES OF SOVIETS

Congresses of Soviets (provincial, county, and rural district) must consist of representatives of all the Soviets on the territory of the respective administrative unit, as well as of the localities (villages, factories, works, etc.) in which questions of administration are decided by the general meeting of electors (Article 57 of the Constitution) on the following basis.

Congresses of Soviets are composed as follows:—

(a) **PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES.** These are composed of representatives of town Soviets, of Soviets of factory settlements with a population exceeding 5,000 inhabitants, and of rural district congresses, in the proportion of one deputy for every 10,000 inhabitants, in the case of the rural district congresses; and of one deputy for every 2,000 electors in the case of town Soviets, Soviets of factory settlements, and Soviets of factories and works situated outside settlements; with a maximum of 300 deputies for the whole province. If the county congresses be held immediately before the provincial congress, the election from rural districts is effected, not by the rural district congresses, but by the county congresses of Soviets.

**NOTE.** Provincial capitals having no Soviets send representatives to the provincial congress in the proportion of one deputy for every 10,000 inhabitants.

(b) COUNTY CONGRESSES. These are composed of representatives of all the Soviets exercising authority in the county's territory, including the Soviet of the county town, in the proportion of one deputy for every 1,000 inhabitants in the case of village Soviets, and of one deputy for every 200 electors in the case of town Soviets, of Soviets of factory settlements, as well as of Soviets of factories and works situated outside settlements; with a maximum of 300 delegates for the whole county.

(c) RURAL DISTRICT CONGRESSES. These are composed of representatives of all the Soviets exercising authority in the territory of the rural district, in the proportion of one deputy for every 100 inhabitants.

NOTE. In those settlements, factories, and works in which questions of administration, according to the note to Article 57 of the Constitution, are decided not by the Soviets, but by a general meeting of the electors, delegates for the county congress are elected at those general meetings.

Congresses of Soviets are convened by the appropriate executive organs of Soviet authority (executive committees) in the given territory, when it is deemed necessary by these organs or demanded by the Soviets of districts with a population of not less than one-third of the total population of the given territory; but in no case should they be convened less than twice a year for each region, province, or county, or less than once in three months for each rural district.

#### SOVIETS

#### IV

The general meetings of Soviets must consider all fundamental questions of local and general importance. Soviets must act not only as instruments for agitation and information, but also as a business mechanism. Every member of a Soviet, when possible, is immediately charged with definite work of public importance. All members of



Soviets are obliged to submit reports to their electors at least once every fortnight. A member of a Soviet who, on two successive occasions, without good cause, has failed to comply with this rule is deprived of his mandate, and a new deputy is elected in his place.

V

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

- 1 Executive committees are elected by congresses, act between congresses as the supreme organ of Soviet authority in their territory, and are subordinate to the immediately higher executive committee, to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and to the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 2 Provincial executive committees have the right of controlling and inspecting the work of all Government institutions, whether temporary or permanent, which are not part of their own departments (with the exception of the offices of armies on active service), immediately reporting thereon to the appropriate central institution.
- 3 For the execution of all work lying within the competence of local authorities, and for the carrying out of decisions of superior executive committees and of the central Government, executive committees organise departments. Provincial executive committees organise the following departments:—

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) Administration          | (9) Food                      |
| (2) War                     | (10) State Control            |
| (3) Justice                 | (11) Economic council         |
| (4) Labour & Social Welfare | (12) Health                   |
| (5) Education               | (13) Statistics               |
| (6) Posts & Telegraphs      | (14) Extraordinary commission |
| (7) Finance                 |                               |
| (8) Agriculture             | (15) Municipal                |

County executive Committees organise the same departments, except those of posts and telegraphs, justice, and extraordinary commission.

The closing of existing departments, as well as the organisation of new departments, is effected by executive committees by arrangement with the appropriate People's Commissariats, with confirmation by the Council of People's Commissaries.

NOTE 1. The number of departments of rural district executive committees and factory settlement Soviets is determined by provincial executive committees.

NOTE 2. All local provincial economic councils are amalgamated with the provincial land departments, under the general direction of the provincial executive committees, and area economic councils with the county land departments, under the general direction of the county executive committees.

NOTE 3. All the local (*i.e.*, provincial, county, area, etc.) administrative and controlling organs of the departments, Chief Committees, and Central Commissions of the Supreme Economic Council form part of the provincial economic councils.

NOTE 4. A detailed instruction, setting out the rights and duties of central and local organs of the Supreme Economic Council with regard to State factories of particular importance, establishments controlled by State trusts, etc., shall be drafted by the Supreme Economic Council and submitted for approval to the Council of People's Commissaries and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. This instruction must preserve without any restrictions the direct control of all trustified and particularly important State undertakings by their central administrative bodies, at the same time determining the extent and forms of the subordination of such undertakings to the provincial economic councils, with a view to the best and speediest satisfaction of local requirements.

At the head of each department is a director, who need not be a member of the executive committee. A board is also formed to collaborate with the director.

NOTE. The executive committee may decide that a board need not be formed.

The director and members of the board are elected by the executive committee. The appropriate People's Commissary has the right of vetoing the election of the director. In case of a disagreement, the question is decided by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

- 5 Responsibility for the work of the department and the timely and accurate execution of the orders of the central authorities is placed both on the director of the department and on the executive committee.
- 6 All the more extensive measures of the departments, important either in principle or for their practical application, as well as departmental estimates (before these are submitted to the central authorities), must be submitted by the department for the approval of the executive committee.
- 7 The director of the department has the right of independent decision on all questions falling within the competence of his department, reporting his decision to his board. In the event of the board disagreeing with any decision of the director, the board, without suspending the execution of the decision, reports its objections to the executive committee.
- 8 Departments of the executive committee are subordinate to the local executive committee, and must carry out all orders and instructions issued by it, as well as those issued by the appropriate departments of superior executive committees, or the People's Commissariats concerned.
- 9 When a department of the executive committee, for some reason or other, finds the instruction of the People's Commissariat, or of a superior executive committee and its department, impossible of execution, it must immediately

report the fact to the Presidium of its own executive committee, which, without suspending the execution of the said instruction, submits its considerations as to the necessity of its cancellation, in the case of a provincial executive committee, to the Council of People's Commissaries, or to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee—in the case of a county executive committee, to the provincial executive committee—and so on; simultaneously informing of its action the body which issued the instruction.

The People's Commissariats and departments of executive committees issue their departmental instructions to the departments concerned, instructions of particular importance being simultaneously reported to the executive committee, which supervises their correct and prompt execution. People's Commissariats and departments of executive committees have the right of direct communication with the corresponding departments of all subordinate executive committees. When People's Commissariats or departments of executive committees enter into communication with a subordinate body, passing over intermediate bodies (*e.g.*, People's Commissariats with a department of a county executive committee, or a provincial department with a rural district department, etc.), they must simultaneously inform the latter of their action.

As a general rule, executive committees and their departments communicate with the superior executive committees and their departments, as well as with the People's Commissariats, through the appropriate intermediate bodies—*e.g.*, rural district executive committees through their county executive committee, and the latter through their provincial executive committee; but this does not

deprive them of their right, when deemed necessary, of direct communication with the superior bodies.

- 13 To direct all current work relative to the administration of the given territory and to the carrying out of the decisions and decrees of the central authorities, the executive committee elects a Presidium, consisting of from three to five members in the case of provinces, and of three members in the case of counties.
- 14 The decision of local bodies to amalgamate one executive committee with another must be ratified in each separate case by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

*VI* The Seventh All-Russian Congress instructs the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to work out a practical scheme for a new administrative and economic division of the R.S.F.S.R.

Pending the solution of this question by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the formation of new administrative economic units, as well as the introduction of a new division into districts of the whole territory of the R.S.F.S.R. or of a part of the same, is, in each separate case, decided by the Council of People's Commissaries, after the question has been preliminarily considered by all the executive committees and People's Commissariats concerned.

*VII* The Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets instructs the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to work out:

- 1 Regulations for the organisation of village Soviets and rural district executive committees.
- 2 Regulations establishing the functions of the Presidiums of executive committees.

3. The question of the organisation of labour inspection, which, in the opinion of the Congress of Soviets, is a matter of extreme urgency.

Signed: The Chairman of the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, M. KALININ.

The Secretary of the Congress, V. AVANESSOV.

*Published in the Supplement to No. 279 of the "Izvestia" of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, December 12, 1919.*

# VILLAGE SOVIETS (REGULATIONS)

## I

### THE ORGANISATION OF VILLAGE SOVIETS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES,

- § 1 A village Soviet is the supreme organ of authority within its own competence and within the boundaries of the locality it serves.
- § 2 The population of the locality concerned must carry out all decisions of the village Soviet.
- § 3 Village Soviets are formed in villages with a population of not less than three hundred inhabitants, in the proportion of one deputy for every 100 inhabitants, with a maximum of fifty deputies.

NOTE 1. The provincial executive committee is given the right, on the recommendation of the county executive committee, to raise or lower, as far as possible for the whole province, the figure of the population stated in § 1, reporting the same to the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs.

NOTE 2. Villages consisting of a number of "communes" form one village Soviet, elected by the population of the whole village.

- § 4 Villages of less than 300 inhabitants form no separate village Soviets. The labouring population of such villages exercises its right of government : (a) by participating in the election of the Soviet of the nearest village which, according to § 1 of the present Regulations, possesses a village Soviet ; (b) by joining with neighbouring villages, hamlets, etc., in electing a common village Soviet for all these populated points ; or, (c) by deciding questions of government at the general assemblies of electors, in accordance with Article 57 of the Constitution.

NOTE. Election of deputies to village Soviets is effected in small villages by the participation of the citizens of these villages either in a general electoral assembly of all the villages served by the given

Soviet, or (where communication, owing to the unfavourable natural conditions of the locality, is difficult) in separate assemblies in each village, with a minimum of one deputy to the Soviet from each village.

The population of Soviet estates and factories situated outside villages takes part in the election of the village Soviets in accordance with the general rules set out in the Constitution, in the decisions of the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and in the present Regulations. § 5

In those small villages, factories outside villages, and Soviet estates, in which questions of government are decided by the general assembly of electors, the meeting elects a chairman of the general assembly for a fixed period, and the said chairman is responsible for the execution of all decisions of the organs of the Soviet Government and of the general assembly. § 6

A village Soviet is convened not less than twice a month. § 7

The executive organ of a village Soviet is : in villages with a population of over 10,000 inhabitants, an executive committee consisting of three members, and in villages with a population of less than 10,000 inhabitants, the chairman of the Soviet. § 8

NOTE. In villages in which the rural district executive committee has its offices, this committee acts as the executive organ of the village Soviet.

The chairman of a village Soviet is responsible for all the work of the Soviet both before the village Soviet by which he was elected, and before the higher organs of Soviet authority. § 9

No departments are formed in connection with village Soviets. A village Soviet has the following staff of officials : in villages with from 500 to 3,000 inhabitants, one § 10



secretary ; in villages with from 3,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, one secretary and one clerk ; in villages with a population exceeding 10,000 inhabitants, one secretary, two assistant secretaries, and one clerk.

§ 11 The salaries of elected officials, as set out in § 8, will be 25 % less than the salaries of members of the rural district executive committee of the rural district to which the village concerned belongs.

§ 12 With a view to enlisting the largest possible number of workers for public work, village Soviets form groups for assisting the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, in accordance with the special instruction of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection ; and also forms commissions for all branches of work, composed of inhabitants of the village enjoying the Soviet franchise.

## II

### DUTIES OF VILLAGE SOVIETS

§ 13 A village Soviet and its chairman are obliged :

(a) To carry out all decisions of superior organs of Soviet authority, and to render assistance to their representatives in the execution of the tasks assigned to them ;

(b) To take all measures ensuring the maintenance of order and the raising of the economic and cultural level of the population of the locality ;

(c) To attract the labouring masses into the work of building the new order ;

(d) To make reports to their electors, in accordance with the decisions of the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

A village Soviet and its chairman have, in particular, the following duties : • § 14

#### IN THE SPHERE OF ADMINISTRATION

Maintenance of revolutionary order, and eradication of crime, more particularly of illicit distilling. § 15

Publication and explanation of all decrees and instructions of the Soviet Government. § 16

Carrying into effect of all forms of labour service, § 17

Compilation of statistics of the population (village usurers, middle and poorer peasantry, electors, the illiterate, etc.). § 18

Registration of all agents of superior executive committees and their departments who may arrive in the locality in the execution of their duties. § 19

Issue of certificates of various kinds to the citizens of the locality. § 20

Registration of births and deaths. § 21

The institution of proceedings against citizens guilty of resisting or breaking the laws issued by the Soviet Government. § 22

#### IN THE SPHERE OF AGRICULTURE

Encouragement of the development of agriculture (organisation of Soviet estates, agricultural communes, brotherhoods (artels), and other co-operative forms of land cultivation, improvement of agricultural methods, etc.), in accordance with the decisions of the land departments and the People's Commissariat for Agriculture. § 23

Execution of the levy in kind imposed upon the agricultural population in connection with the Socialist re-organisation of agriculture (providing the land organisers with the necessary workmen, carts, materials, housing accommodation, etc.), and rendering to them, as well as to the agronomic § 24

- staff and generally to all persons commissioned by the land departments, assistance in the execution of their duties.,
- § 25 Rendering assistance to the local Soviet estates, and in connection with the upkeep of forest manors.
  - § 26 Surveillance over the exact observance by the agricultural population of all the laws and regulations of the Republic affecting the organisation of landholding and cultivation.
  - § 27 Co-operation with the appropriate organisations in compilation of statistics of lands, agricultural population, ploughed areas, sowings, seeds, implements and livestock ; and supplying all materials bearing on the said questions to the persons and institutions authorised for the purpose.

#### IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

- § 28 Maintenance in proper condition and repair of bridges, highways, roads, etc.
- § 29 Maintenance of the fire-engines in proper condition, provision of measures against the occurrence of fires and of measures for extinguishing fires.
- § 30 Protection of public buildings against deterioration and ruin.
- § 31 Encouragement of the development of domestic ("Kustar") industry, and organisation as far as possible, of local "kustar" workshops, brotherhoods (artels), etc., in accordance with the instructions of the appropriate organs of the Soviet Government.

#### IN THE SPHERE OF FOOD-SUPPLY

- § 32 Strict execution of orders issued by all food-control organs.
- § 33 Registration of the harvest and sowing area, and collection of produce due for delivery according to assessment.
- § 34 Provision of measures against speculation, concealment, illicit trading in and export of produce due for delivery.

## IN THE SPHERE OF LABOUR SERVICE

Carrying out of all forms of labour service, as directed by § 35  
the rural district authority.

NOTE. As regards their importance, orders bearing on the carrying out of universal labour service are to be considered on the same footing as orders of the military authorities, and should be executed with the same expedition and precision as applies to directions of the Commissariat for War.

Compilation of labour statistics according to craft and kind § 36  
of service, together with registration of all horses, in accordance with special forms worked out by the Chief Committee for Universal Labour Service.

Supervision of the exact execution by those enlisted for § 37  
universal labour service of all decisions of the rural district executive committee (despatch for work in due time, and the supply of carts and tools, where this is provided for in the regulations).

Proper distribution and utilisation of persons called up for § 38  
universal labour service, in accordance with the state of their health, physical development, and professional experience, as well as with the kind of service.

Co-operation with any representatives of provincial and § 39  
county committees for universal labour service who may be sent to the villages, in their work of preparing and carrying out the mobilisation of labour.

Supplying statistical data relative to the utilisation of the § 40  
population for labour service, in accordance with the special forms worked out by the Chief Committee for Universal Labour Service.

Supervision of the proper utilisation by the economic § 41  
organs of those called up for universal labour service. Supervision of the protection of labour in general, and of the protection of children and women in particular, in

accordance with the regulations for the protection of labour issued by the Chief Committee for Universal Labour Service.

- § 42 Exemption, whether temporary or permanent, of persons liable to labour service, in accordance with the exemption regulations issued by the Chief Committee for Universal Labour Service ; and issue of the necessary certificates.
- § 43 The provision of measures to deal with evasion of or desertion from labour service.
- § 44 Prosecution of individuals who infringe the labour service regulations, evade service, or desert.
- § 45 Receiving all complaints of irregular mobilisation for labour service, non-economic use of the labour of those mobilised, etc. ; the satisfaction of these complaints, or their redirection to superior authorities.

#### IN THE MILITARY SPHERE

- § 46 The keeping of records of all citizens, horses, carts, and harness-gear liable to military service, in accordance with the existing laws.
- § 47 Supervision of the exact attendance by citizens liable to military service at parades for checking purposes.
- § 48 The provision of statistical data and estimates relative to the mobilisation of citizens for military service, as well as to the supplying of the army with horses, carts, and harness-gear, in accordance with the existing laws and the instructions of the war commissariats.
- § 49 The carrying out of the mobilisation of citizens for military service, as well as the supplying of the army with horses, carts, and harness-gear, in accordance with the existing laws and the instructions of the war commissariats.
- § 50 Supervision of the performance by the population of

universal military service ; and the adoption of measures against desertion.

The carrying into effect of all orders relative to universal military training of the workers. § 51

Co-operation with all organisers and agitators sent to the villages in their work of preparing the population for the application of proposed military measures. § 52

Co-operation with military organisations and army units, by providing housing accommodation, food supplies, and cartage, in accordance with the existing laws dealing with the question. § 53

#### IN THE SPHERE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Organisation in the village of a reading-hut (or of a people's house with a library and reading-room), and of a council to conduct the same. § 54

Organisation at the reading-hut (or people's house), through the council, of public readings of newspapers, pamphlets, decrees of the Soviet Government, the Constitution of the Soviet Republic, etc., and of discussions on those subjects. § 55

Circulation of newspapers, leaflets, etc. § 56

Establishment at the reading-hut (people's house) of elementary schools for adults and young people. § 57

Assisting in the organisation of other educational enterprises, such as circles, excursions, lectures on various subjects, choirs, dramatic performances, etc. § 58

Internal administration of children's homes, schools, and continuation schools (repair, lighting, heating, etc.). § 59

Organisation of elections to the rural district public education council. § 60

Mobilisation, as far as necessary, of all local literate citizens for compulsory service in the organisation and conducting of educational work. § 61

#### IN THE SPHERE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- § 62 Supervision of the cleanliness and sanitary state of villages; and particularly the provision and improvement of sources of drinking water.
- § 63 Encouragement of the peasants to build public and private baths.
- § 64 Co-operation with the medical staff in carrying out measures against epidemics (inoculation against typhus, small-pox, cholera; providing of public boilers, etc.).
- § 65 The upkeep of and supply of fuel, food, etc., to local hospitals.

#### IN THE SPHERE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

- § 66 Registration of all necessitous workers, with a view to assisting them out of State and local resources.
- § 67 Organisation of compulsory agricultural assistance for them, in the form of tilling their land, public sowing, etc.
- § 68 Assisting necessitous families of Red soldiers as well as sick and wounded Red soldiers and old soldiers returning from the front, by organising on their behalf collections of money and articles of all kinds, such as clothing, boots, etc.

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEMBERS OF VILLAGE SOVIETS

- § 69 Members of village Soviets are liable to the strictest penalties of the revolutionary law for indiscipline, irregular execution of the decrees of the Soviet Government, inactivity, abuse of authority, and uncivil treatment of the population.

Signed : For the Chairman of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee, J. LUTOVINOV.  
The Secretary of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee, A. ENUKIDZE.

Published in No. 34 of the *Izvestia* of the All-Russian  
Central Executive Committee. 15.2.1920

# THE RURAL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (REGULATIONS)

## ORGANISATION OF RURAL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

I

A rural district executive committee is elected for a term of six months by the rural district congress of Soviets, and is composed of three members in rural districts with less than 5,000 inhabitants, of four members in rural districts with less than 10,000 inhabitants, of five members in rural districts with less than 15,000 inhabitants, and of from six to seven members in rural districts with more than 15,000 inhabitants. § 1

A rural district executive committee, during intervals between congresses, is the supreme organ of authority within its own competence and within the boundaries of the rural district. § 2

A rural district executive committee elects from amongst its members a chairman, a deputy-chairman, and a secretary. § 3

A rural district executive committee is answerable for its actions to the rural district congress of Soviets and to superior organs of authority. § 4

A member of a rural district executive committee has no right to leave his post before the next election without cognizance and agreement of the rural district executive committee. § 5

Members of a rural district executive committee distribute amongst themselves the various duties connected with current work and the superintendence of departments. § 6

The chairman of a rural district executive committee acts at the same time as the director of the administrative department. § 7



- § 8 The chairman is responsible for the prompt and accurate execution of the orders of superior Soviet organs and of the local executive committee ; he also co-ordinates the work of the various departments, convenes the sessions of the executive committee, and is responsible for all the work of the executive committee.
- § 9 The executive committee considers suggestions, statements and reports of its chairman, its departments, and the village Soviets ; supervises and directs their activity ; examines and works out plans for the execution of the more important directions of superior organs of authority.
- § 10 Confirms the appointment of responsible workers, in agreement with the corresponding instructions of the central authorities.
- § 11 Considers and confirms its estimates.
- § 12 Gives decisions in the cases of complaints against actions and orders of the chairman, departments of the village Soviets, and other responsible persons.
- § 13 Imposes punishment for infringement of regulations, where this is provided for in the regulations themselves.
- § 14 A rural district executive committee forms the following departments : (1) administration, (2) land, (3) war, (4) public education.

NOTE 1. The duties of the department of administration include, in addition to the tasks of the departments of administration as specified in the regulation on the subject, also all matters which are left outside the competence of the other departments of the rural district executive committee.

NOTE 2. The rural district executive committee has no right to organise new departments without the permission of the provincial executive committee.

- § 15 The following maximum number of officials is fixed for all departments of the rural district executive committee : secretary 1, clerks 4, filing clerk 1, copyist 1, messenger 1,

watchman 1. The secretary to the rural district executive committee acts at the same time as the secretary of the department of administration. The above staff of officials is fixed for rural districts with a population of over 10,000 inhabitants. For rural districts with a smaller population, a reduced staff of officials is established by the rural district executive committee, and is ratified by the provincial executive committee.

NOTE. The People's Commissariat for Home Affairs has the right of altering the number of officials specified in § 15.

Members of the rural district executive committee are paid § 16  
their salaries out of the credits granted in the estimate of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs, at the same rates as those for members of the county executive committees, less 25 %.

## DUTIES OF RURAL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES II

Consolidation of the authority of the Soviets ; organisation § 17  
and unification of the agricultural proletariat, the poorer and the middle sections of the peasantry, round the Soviets; the struggle with parasitical elements.

Carrying into effect all decisions of the superior organs of § 18  
the Soviet Government.

General direction, control, and co-ordination of the work of § 19  
all the Soviets in the rural district.

Maintenance of revolutionary order within the boundaries § 20  
of the rural district ; prevention and suppression of counter-revolutionary and other crimes.

Organisation of, and assistance in, the development and § 21  
revival of agriculture (repair of agricultural machines and implements, construction of flour mills, drainage, irrigation, communal ploughing of waste land, etc.).

Protection of forests from illicit felling ; assistance in the § 22

- State preparation of timber stocks ; organisation of supply to the peasants and local institutions (schools, hospitals, children's homes, etc.) of fuel and building materials.
- § 23 Provision of all necessary measures for organisation of Councils of Popular Education, for abolition of illiteracy, for raising the cultural standard of the population, for extinguishing racial animosity, and for creating a wide network of educational institutions.
  - § 24 Preservation of cleanliness and sanitation in the rural district ; eradication of epidemics ; and adoption of measures for the improvement of villages (installation of electric lighting, building of bath-houses, roads, bridges, post and telegraph offices, etc.).
  - § 25 Regular and timely payment of allowances to the families of Red soldiers ; checking of allowances paid ; and the rendering of immediate help to necessitous families of Red soldiers.
  - § 26 Organisation of agricultural and other aid to the poorest class in the villages.
  - § 27 Execution of mobilisation orders and combating desertion from the Red Army.
  - § 28 Execution of labour mobilisation orders and combating labour desertion.
  - § 29 Proper and timely registration, apportionment amongst villages, and collection of the products levies subject to delivery to the State, in accordance with the instructions of the food organs, together with the supervision of the proper distribution of products and goods received in connection with the levy.
  - § 30 Co-operation in the work of all the economic organs of the Republic in the collection of raw materials (leather, flax, etc.), and in the realisation of their other objects.
  - § 31 Combating of every form of speculation, concealment,

and illicit sale and export of products which should be delivered to the State according to levy.

Preparation of the estimates of the rural district executive committee and its departments, and of the estimates of village Soviets. Surveillance of the proper collection of State and local taxes. § 32

Signed: For the Chairman of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee LUTOVINO.  
Secretary ENUKIDZE.

18th March 1920.

Published in No. 67 of the *Izvestia* of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, March 27, 1920.

## DECREE OF THE EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS CONCERNING THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION

### *I* THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. All decrees concerning the establishment of general standards of political or economic life, as well as all decrees introducing radical changes in the existing practice of any State institutions, must be examined by the A.R.C.E.C. Moreover, all draft decrees and resolutions upon questions of general political and economic significance, in which are included all more important measures concerning military and foreign affairs, shall be published by the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. at least two clear weeks before its session, in order that local Soviets may have time and opportunity to consider them before the final decision be taken.
2. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets charges the A.R.C.E.C. with the enforcement of control by the A.R.C.E.C. over the work of departments and of local Soviets. In execution of this duty it shall see that reports upon the working of the People's Commissariats are regularly laid before the sessions of the A.R.C.E.C., as well as reports upon the working of the different provincial executive committees: after their preliminary examination by special commissions of the A.R.C.E.C. During the period between successive All-Russian Congresses of Soviets investigation should be made into the working of all the more important People's Commissariats.
3. The Congress charges the A.R.C.E.C. or its Presidium, jointly with the Council of People's Commissaries, within two months to review the composition of the People's Commissariats, their boards, as well as the boards, of the

industrial Chief Committees, Central Committees, and other central bodies, with a view to introducing local workers who have become particularly prominent by reason of their organising abilities.

The Congress charges the A.R.C.E.C. to detail from its personnel a sufficient number of workers for the continuous work of the Presidium, which is to be considered their principal duty. 4

The complement of the A.R.C.E.C. is increased to 300 persons. 5

Regular sessions of the A.R.C.E.C. are to be held not less frequently than once every two months. 6

## THE PRESIDIUM OF THE A.R.C.E.C. II

Supplementing paragraph 8, section I, of the resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets upon the Soviet Constitution, the Congress of Soviets assigns to the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. the right to annul resolutions of the Council of People's Commissaries and to issue through administrative channels the necessary regulations in the name of the A.R.C.E.C., under the obligation of submitting a report of its action to the next regular session of the A.R.C.E.C. I

Questions and disputes concerning the reciprocal relations between People's Commissariats, Chief Committees, and Central Committees on the one hand, and local executive committees on the other, are to be settled by the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. 2

Questions concerning the administrative and economic divisions of the R.S.F.S.R. are to be decided by the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. 3

The Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. is responsible for preparing with particular care for the All-Russian Congress 4

of Soviets and for the sessions of the A.R.C.E.C. All necessary material for these is to be prepared and published by the Presidium at least one month before the Congress, or two weeks before the session of the A.R.C.E.C.

### III

#### THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIES

- 1 Every decree or State measure not permitting of delay, including all legislation referring to military matters and all measures concerning foreign affairs involving obligations upon the R.S.F.S.R., shall be invariably investigated and confirmed by the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 2 No organ of government with the exception of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, its Presidium, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, its Presidium, and the Council of People's Commissaries, has the right to issue any legislation of national importance.
- 3 Each People's Commissariat will make dispositions and issue regulations only within the limits of its own competence, strictly defined by decree of the A.R.C.E.C., its Presidium, and the Council of People's Commissaries.

### IV

#### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CENTRAL AND LOCAL BODIES

- 1 Dispositions of local congresses of Soviets can be set aside only by higher congresses, their executive committees, the A.R.C.E.C., or its Presidium.  
Dispositions of executive committees or of their Presidium can be set aside by higher congresses or executive committees, or by the Presidium of such a body; by the A.R.C.E.C., or its Presidium; and by the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 2 Dispositions made by People's Commissariats may be set aside by the A.R.C.E.C., its Presidium, and the Council of People's Commissaries.
- 3 Every disposition of any individual People's Commissariat

shall be brought into force without delay, except in the case of extraordinary circumstances, or when such disposition is in clear contravention of a decision of the Council of People's Commissaries, or of the A.R.C.E.C., or by resolution of a provincial executive committee for which the latter collectively shall be legally responsible.

In any such case of suspension, the provincial executive committee shall immediately inform the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C., the Council of People's Commissaries and the People's Commissariat concerned, of the fact of suspension and of the committee's reason for its action. The Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. shall decide as to the impeachment of the party at fault—i.e., either the People's Commissary or the provincial executive committee—for wrongly suspending the disposition of the People's Commissariat.

Similar procedure in like circumstances may be undertaken by county executive committees in relation to the local dispositions of provincial departments.

Central departments are bound by regulation to conduct all business through the local Soviets and their departments without reference to sections and special bodies not subordinate to the local Soviets. 4

In carrying out this regulation, all permanent local bodies and administrative or economic institutions of all People's Commissariats, as well as all bodies temporarily set up for the execution of emergency work, shall be included in the corresponding department of the provincial or district executive committee, or shall be immediately subordinated to such executive committee.

Exceptions to this regulation in the case of particular institutions may be allowed by special resolution of the A.R.C.E.C., or of its Presidium.

Direct orders to an executive committee or to its Presidium 5



can be given only by a higher executive committee and its Presidium, by the A.R.C.E.C., and its Presidium, or by the Council of People's Commissaries.

- 6 The Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. is empowered to revise the decree of April 26, 1920, concerning disciplinary and administrative proceedings to which members of executive committees may be liable, taking as its basis the principle that disciplinary measures against members of executive committees, whether administering departments or not, may not be applied by a People's Commissary.
- 7 The Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. is instructed to revise and supplement the resolution of November 25, 1920, concerning officials sent on missions to the districts by central departments, with a view to the gradual abolition of the system of sending special commissioners, and to the transference of their functions to the local Soviet organs.
- 8 The Council of People's Commissaries is instructed to review the regulations concerning People's Commissariats and their local departments, with a view to establishing agreement of their provisions with the resolutions of the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of Soviets, and to uniformity in the composition of the local departments. It is to draw up a report for approval by the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. not later than April 1, 1921. Thereafter corresponding regulations issued earlier will become null and void.

#### V CONCERNING THE WORK OF „LOCAL SOVIETS AND THEIR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

- I Affirming the necessity of bringing into force Section 4 of the resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets, the Eighth Congress of Soviets considers it indispensable :—
  - (a) Regularly to re-elect the village, rural district, town and

other Soviets upon the established dates, and to convene congresses of Soviets.

- (b) To form town Soviets in all settlements of an urban character.
- (c) To convoke plenary sessions of town Soviets not less frequently than twice a month.
- (d) To make it the duty of executive committees to meet : in rural districts and counties, not less frequently than once a week ; in provinces, not less frequently than once a fortnight.
- (e) In addition to the sessions of the executive committees, to hold joint conferences : of rural district executive committees with representatives of village Soviets, not less frequently than once a month ; of county executive committees with representatives of rural district executive committees, not less frequently than once a month ; of provincial executive committees with representatives of county and area executive committees, not less frequently than once in two months.
- (f) At each of these conferences and sessions to consider all questions, whether of local or of State importance ; but the decisions reached to be subject to confirmation by the corresponding executive committees.
- (g) To convoke, in addition to the foregoing, periodical conferences of chiefs of departments of executive committees.
- (h) To induce the greatest number possible of workers and peasants to attend the sessions of Soviets, arranging for the latter to be held in the working-class quarters of towns, and, so far as possible, in large works and factories.
- (j) For all executive committees to arrange for the greatest possible publicity amongst the worker and peasant

population concerning the measures undertaken by the Soviet Government, and to establish the closest connection between responsible Soviet workers and the working and peasant masses by obliging the former to make periodical reports of their activity to the workers and peasants.

- (k) That all decisions of town Soviets and of all county and provincial congresses of Soviets be communicated to the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C., which will publish every two months a summary of all the more important resolutions.
- 2 In order to bring the foregoing measures into force as rapidly and as systematically as possible, the Congress of Soviets charges the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. within two months from now to draw up the necessary instructions.
- 3 The Congress lays upon the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. and upon the Presidiums of local executive committees the duty of ensuring special supervision over the application of all the above enumerated measures, and in particular, over the carrying out of the resolutions of the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of Soviets relative to the Soviet Constitution.

#### VI THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS INSTRUCTS THE PRESIDIUM OF THE A.R.C.E.C.

(a) To hasten the work of determining the new administrative divisions of the R.S.F.S.R., principally upon the basis of economic requirements. To require all departments, within a period of one month, to complete their work in this connection, and to submit their conclusions to the administrative commission of the A.R.C.E.C.

The elaboration of a general scheme of administrative

economic divisions will in no way hinder the bringing into force of approved plans for individual regions.

(b) With a view to a more efficient control over the work of all organs of government, to the elimination of bureaucracy and the simplification of their machinery; in order also to attract the bulk of the working class into the organs of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. is directed to pay particular attention to the working of these organs, and to make it a regular practice to investigate the working of all branches of State administration, such as, for instance, the distribution of ration cards, of living accommodation, of transport, of essential commodities, of fuel, etc., etc.

(c) To draw up regulations for procedure at elections to rural district executive committees and village Soviets within a period of two months.

(d) To accelerate the measures already begun by the Council of People's Commissaries for simplifying the machinery of the Soviets and for determining their establishments, with a view to the transference of officials to productive work, such as the campaign against illiteracy, etc., etc.

(e) To direct the A.R.C.E.C.'s Commission on the Federal Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. to complete its work by March 1, 1921.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED BY THE NINTH ALL - RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

DECEMBER, 1921

The Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets resolves:—

- I That in regard to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, Art. 26 of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. be amended to the effect that ordinary All-Russian Congresses of Soviets are convened by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee once a year.
- II That in regard to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the decisions of the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of Soviets with reference to sessions of the A.R.C.E.C. (Collection of Laws 1919, No. 64, and 1921, No. 1) be amended as follows:—
  - (1) The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is convened in session by the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. not less than three times a year, and, in order to make possible a full consideration of subjects discussed, the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee shall be of longer duration. In addition to this, upon the conclusion of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, there shall be convened a session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for the election of the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. of the Council of People's Commissaries and the commissions of the A.R.C.E.C.
  - (2) Extraordinary sessions may be convened on the initiative of the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. at the suggestion of the Council of People's Commissaries, or when demanded by one-third of the members of the A.R.C.E.C.
  - (3) The All-Russian Central Executive Committee forms

- a permanent budget commission, a federal commission, and others, which act in accordance with the rules laid down by the A.R.C.E.C.
- (4) Each permanent commission of the A.R.C.E.C. works under the chairmanship of one of the members of the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C.
- (5) In view of the growth of the Russian Soviet Federation and the desire of individual Soviet republics to have their representatives on the highest legislative body of the Republic, the Ninth Congress of Soviets resolves that in amendment of the decision of the Eighth Congress of Soviets, the membership of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee shall be increased up to 386 members.

That in regard to local Congresses of Soviets, Art. 34 of the Constitution and the decisions of the Seventh Congress of Soviets (Collection of Laws 1919, No. 64, and 1921, No. 1) be amended as follows:— III

- (1) All ordinary Congresses of Soviets of the autonomous republics, regions, provinces, counties and rural districts are convened once a year.
- (2) Elections for town, settlement, and village Soviets are held once a year.

NOTE 1. In cases of necessity, provincial executive committees may convene extraordinary county congresses of Soviets, and county executive committees, rural district congresses of Soviets, at which new executive committees may be elected.

NOTE 2. The Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. may decide that extraordinary congresses of Soviets of autonomous republics, regions and provinces should be convened, and, when necessary, that new elections of executive bodies should be held.

- (3) Supplementary to Art. 57 of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., and in amendment of the decision of the Eighth Congress of Soviets in regard to the work of local Soviets (Collection of Laws 1921, No. 1),

Provincial congresses of Soviets shall have the right to appoint members to act on the provincial executive committees in excess of the number fixed by the Constitution, the appointments being made in order that the provincial executive committee should include not less than one representative from each county and from each industrial district. Enlarged sessions of the provincial executive committees are convened at the time fixed by the provincial executive committees.

*IV* That, in regard to the departments of local executive committees, the decision of the Seventh Congress of Soviets with reference to executive committees (Collection of Laws 1919, No. 64), be amended as follows:—

- (1) County executive committees shall not form departments of workers' and peasants' inspection, justice, or the Extraordinary Commission, or local economic councils.
- (2) Such departments of provincial executive committees as may be concerned shall have the right, where it may be found necessary, and by arrangement with the county executive committee, to appoint one authorised representative for each corresponding branch of administration, and to give such representative the right of using the organisation of a department of the county executive committee, in accordance with the instructions of the Presidium of the county executive committee.

**NOTE.** The Supreme Economic Council, acting through its provincial branches, and equally its provincial branches acting on their own initiative, by agreement with the county executive committees and upon obtaining the approval of the provincial executive committees, shall have the right to form branches with a minimum staff in industrial districts and counties.

- (3) Authorised representatives as well as branches are answerable both to the provincial and to the county executive committees.
- (4) Executive committees of small towns and industrial and other settlements of the urban type (except principal towns in counties and provinces) may, when authorised by the provincial executive committee, form the following departments: administration, education, municipal economy, and public health.
- (5) Departments and economic conferences attached to rural district executive committees are abolished. The rural executive committees shall consist of three members.

NOTE. In exceptional cases provincial executive committees have the right to raise the number of members of the rural district executive committee up to four.

The functions of the rural executive committee are distributed amongst its members, in accordance with the regulations issued by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

- (6) Rural district executive committees shall have a single office organisation to serve the technical requirements of all branches of administration.
- (7) All members of rural district executive committees receive their salaries out of State funds. Chairmen of village Soviets and all the technical staff of rural district executive committees receive their salaries from provincial executive committees out of their local funds.

That in regard to the decisions of the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of Soviets, the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets confirms the necessity of unswerving compliance with such points in the decisions of the Seventh and Eighth



All-Russian Congresses of Soviets as have been left without alteration.

- V/ That, in regard to the number of provinces and provincial executive committees, it be considered necessary to reduce the number of provincial executive committees, amalgamating into a single province such neighbouring provinces as are connected with one another by convenient means of communication and close economic relations; and that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee be instructed to ratify, not later than at its next ordinary session, concrete proposals as to such amalgamations of provinces.

Chairman of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee,

M. KALININ.

Secretary of the All-Russian Central  
Executive Committee,

A. ENUKIDZE.

PART III  
THE CONSTITUTION AT WORK  
1918-1922



### Part III.—THE CONSTITUTION AT WORK

. 1918-1922.

#### I.—THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*The All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets* was created as early as June, 1917, when the Soviets had not yet assumed State authority. From a central unified executive organisation, elected by the general Congress of Soviets from all over Russia, it naturally became the central and, between congresses, the supreme legislative body when the great change in the position of the Soviets took place in October, 1917.

The A.R.C.E.C., according to the constitution of July, 1918, which was based on the practice of twelve months, consisted of 200 members elected by the All-Russian Congress. This number was increased at the eighth congress, in December, 1920, to 300 members. At first the builders of the Soviet constitution conceived of the A.R.C.E.C. as a legislative body in more or less permanent session, working, consequently, in much the same way as western Parliaments, although its functions were much wider. Further experience, however, showed that the demands of the working masses for constant control over and contact with their representatives, the ever-present danger that those representatives would lose the vital acquaintance with local conditions which is essential for a revolutionary government, and the extreme shortage of practised experienced administrative workers in the districts, all combined to make it impossible for the A.R.C.E.C. to remain constantly in session in Moscow. Since the beginning of 1921, therefore, the A.R.C.E.C. meets regularly once every two months for approximately a week. At these sessions it considers all decrees affecting political or economic life, or introducing radical changes into the existing State

institutions. The regular reports of the People's Commissariats, or ministries, are considered at these sessions. The reports of the Presidium, or standing committee, relative to the execution of the decisions of the last session during the intervening two months, and of various sub-committees appointed to work out specific questions, are also submitted and discussed.

In practice the net result has been that only those members of the A.R.C.E.C. remain in Moscow who are (1) engaged on work in one of the People's Commissariats or State inter-departmental commissions; or (2) detailed for specific work by the A.R.C.E.C. either as members of the Presidium or as representatives of the A.R.C.E.C. on various public bodies. The majority of the members, however, are engaged between the sessions on important work in their own provinces, as members of executive committees, chiefs of departments, and so on.

Detailed statistics may be quoted to illustrate the work of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee between January 1 and May 1 of 1921. At the three sessions 700 questions of a current nature were discussed, 132 being brought forward by private members, 75 by the People's Commissariat for Transport, 69 by the Supreme Appeal Tribunal, and so on. The nature of the questions discussed is as follows: 353 administrative (involving questions of provincial boundaries and control of the activity of the People's Commissariats and local executive committees) and 205 judicial (questions of amnesty, appeal, etc.).

During these four months 35 commissions were instituted. Of these 5 were in connection with draft projects for creating autonomous republics, 5 for reviewing the work of various institutions, 4 on questions of general administra-

tive organisation and questions of local government, 4 on judicial questions, and the remainder on economic questions and questions of the internal administration of the A.R.C.E.C. itself.

Characteristic of the work of the A.R.C.E.C. is its "waiting room" in which any worker or peasant can see members of the highest legislative authority in the country without any annoying formalities and through them approach the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C. This institution, in fact, realises in real life the long-dreamt-of ideal of the most advanced democrats, namely, the right of private individuals to initiate public legislation—which has never before been attained so effectively. During these four months 1,667 such cases were registered; 389 of them were raised by peasants.

To complete the picture of this unprecedented legislative body, which is at the same time a *working* institution, both as a unit and in the person of each of its members, it is necessary to quote from the standing orders of the A.R.C.E.C. published in December, 1919, the provisions relative to the members. No member may be arrested without the consent of the Presidium or the chairman of the A.R.C.E.C.; travelling expenses of the members are allowed by the Presidium when they are travelling on public work; they may take part in a consultative capacity in the proceedings of all local Soviets and executive committees; they have the right, on production of their mandate, of admission to all Soviet institutions and departments to obtain information on any point they require. On the other hand, no member of the A.R.C.E.C. may refuse to execute any task assigned to him by the Presidium; every member must be actively engaged in Soviet work, either in a central or in a local organ of the Govern-

ment; members of the A.R.C.E.C. who have failed to attend three successive sessions without adequate reasons forfeit their seats and are replaced by reserve members, or "candidates," elected at the same time as the A.R.C.E.C. at the All-Russian Congress; all members receive salary at fixed rates from the A.R.C.E.C., but receipt of additional salary or income from any source is forbidden.

Summarising the foregoing, it is clear that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is specifically the organ which co-ordinates the activities of the local Soviet authorities and of the central Soviet organs; legislating, administering, and exercising judicial functions at one and the same time. Its special position is, perhaps, most clearly shown by the fact that the most important decrees affecting fundamental problems of Russia's existence (for example, decrees affecting war and peace, or the most important laws of the "new economic policy") are issued by its Presidium, and signed by the Chairman and Secretary—occasionally, by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries as well. Similarly, it is the Chairman of the A.R.C.E.C. who receives the credentials of foreign diplomats and confirms the appointment of Russian delegates or envoys abroad; and it is required to render valid grants of the sole titles of honour instituted in the Republic—the Order of the Red Banner (military) and the Order of the Labour Red Banner (civilian).

Concentrating in its hands the full authority of the State for all purposes, by direct commission of the workers' and peasants' representatives at the annual Soviet Congresses, the A.R.C.E.C. thus occupies in the Socialist Republic a position analogous to that of monarch or president in States based upon other forms of society.

## II—THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIES

The *Council of People's Commissaries* is that section of the apparatus of government which concentrates in its hands from day to day all government authority for purposes of current problems of administration. It is the Cabinet of the Soviet constitutional machine; and in its resemblance to the Cabinets of other political forms represents the nearest approach made by the Soviet constitution to those which have preceded it.

The supreme executive authority—and in Russia it is very rare that the executive authority undertakes to legislate on important points without previously raising the matter in the supreme organ of *all* authority, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee—cannot be bound in its inner working by formal regulations, rules of procedure, etc., which must inevitably be drawn up in the case of a body which unites the executive with other functions. A weekly or bi-weekly meeting of eighteen or nineteen heads of the principal administrative departments of State, who come together primarily not to legislate but to solve those of the problems which have arisen in the working of their departments which affect other sides of the national life—such meetings will be found at the head of the constitutional machinery of any modern community. If the Council of People's Commissaries is, nevertheless, different from the Cabinets of western countries, it is perhaps in the actual make-up—the education and social outlook—of the men within it: possibly also in the existence of one or two departments of State which are not found in political structures based on a different social order.



In the case of the Soviet Cabinet, moreover, the restriction of its functions to the framework laid down by the Soviet constitution of July, 1918, "the general direction of the affairs of the Republic," is made more marked by a number of peculiar features.

Each individual People's Commissary is the head of a department, the care for which was entrusted to him by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee or the All-Russian Congress of Soviets: but he is responsible not only to these bodies, but also to a board, which exists in each People's Commissariat, and with which each People's Commissary must consult on all questions, with the exception of urgent cases. The board, moreover, without interfering with the execution of any decision of the People's Commissary concerned, has the right of bringing the question at issue before the whole of the Council of People's Commissaries, at one of its regular sessions. It is very rare, in point of fact, that a session of the latter has taken place during the last few years without any members of the boards (in which are included the assistant People's Commissaries) being present.

The constitution of July, 1918, laid down that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has the right to annul or suspend any decision or order of the Council of People's Commissaries. An amendment adopted by the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December, 1920, permits the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to exercise this right also, both as regards individual Commissariats and with reference to decisions of the Council of People's Commissaries as a whole.

These decisions have since 1918 been issued in one uniform way, over the signature of the chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries, as representing the whole body, and of the Administrator of the Chancery and the Secretary to the Council of People's Commissaries, as technical confirmation that the published decree corresponds exactly to the original adopted at the session of the Council. This practice has taken the place of the heterogeneous and unsystematic forms prevalent during the first months of the revolution, when sometimes several People's Commissaries signed a decree and sometimes only one. Only decrees and national proclamations of exceptional importance—such as announcements of a national crisis—are now signed by more than one People's Commissary: while decisions published over the signature of one People's Commissary alone, not the chairman, means that the announcement in question is of the nature of an administrative regulation, and not a decree affecting the mass of citizens.

All decrees of the Council, and all regulations issued by its members individually, are binding upon the central and local authorities whose work they affect. The transmission of these dispositions takes place in two ways: to the principal local authorities (Soviet executive committees in provinces, counties, and rural districts, and Soviets in towns and villages), where the matter involved is one of general importance, and involving the work of more than one department (for example, a decree instituting a three weeks' "fuel campaign," a decree instituting a ten per cent. tax on all theatre, concert, etc., tickets in aid of the Famine Relief Fund, or a decree instituting a network of brigade political schools of instruction for the needs of the Red Territorial Army):

and direct to the local departments themselves (health, education, labour, general administration, etc.) where the question is one of detailing or explaining the work of the People's Commissariat concerned to its corresponding department of the local authority (for example, where it is a question of organising mutual aid committees in the villages and rural districts under the auspices of the county social welfare departments, or of registration of the stocks and inventories of Soviet estates by provincial land departments, or of explaining to the local economic councils the policy of the Soviet Government with regard to the leasing of factories).

Once transmitted, as has been pointed out, the decree or regulation is binding; but the amendments to the Constitution adopted in December, 1920, provide for the suspension by provincial executive committees of decisions of individual People's Commissariats, "in extraordinary circumstances, or when such disposition is in clear contravention of a decision of the Council of People's Commissaries or the A.R.C.E.C., or in other cases by resolution of a provincial executive committee." In such cases, however, the latter must immediately inform the Presidium of the A.R.C.E.C., the Council of People's Commissaries, and the People's Commissariat concerned; and it bears collective responsibility before the first-named body, which shall decide which party is at fault (if necessary, which party shall be impeached). That this amendment to the Constitution has not remained merely on paper has been shown by several striking cases, during the last twelve months, of impeachments before the Supreme Judicial Tribunal of local food departments, economic councils, departments of health, etc., for arbitrarily setting aside in one way or another the decisions

of the central authority from which\* they receive instructions.

On the whole, however, striking irregularities in the execution of the decisions of the central authorities have been, wild and vague assertions during the past four years notwithstanding, surprisingly few, wherever local conditions did not completely prevent the transmission of those decisions in a clear and lucid form, or were not in some other way so abnormal as to distract public attention from the particular question involved. While, judging by customary standards, this is a surprising feature to encounter in a revolutionary administration, on the other hand it is perhaps as characteristic of the new methods heralded by the rise of this revolutionary administration as any other side of its activity. In the words of a recent writer: "Any politically-educated citizen knows that every decree of the Council of People's Commissaries, whether it deals with collective payment of the workers or with some reform in the army, is not merely the composition of some wise men in a Cabinet. Every decree is the product of vast preliminary work at working-class meetings, in factory committees, in Soviets, trade unions, party organisations, peasant and Red Army assemblies, economic conferences, and so on. If anyone were to undertake the task of tracing the history of some important decree, he would receive convincing evidence of how its main points, first in the shape of vague expressions of desire, and then in more or less definite resolutions, took shape amongst the active rank and file of the class-conscious masses. And very soon, passing through the stages of party, trade union, and Soviet discussion, they reach the centre, where they receive their final form in the shape of a new law."

When we turn to the few but illuminating statistics we have at our disposal to illustrate the work of the Council of People's Commissaries, it becomes difficult to decide at what to be more astonished—at the activity of the masses, to which reference has just been made, or to the immense capacity for toil of the men at the other end of the constitutional machine. During the six months between November 1, 1920, and May 1, 1921, 395 questions came up before the Council of People's Commissaries, of which 57 were brought forward by the Supreme Economic Council, 41 by the Sub-Council (a special commission of the Council, set up in the middle of 1919 for the purpose of dealing preliminarily with numbers of questions, principally of an economic character, thereby facilitating the work of the larger body), 34 by the People's Commissariat for Food, 26 by the Commissariat for Foreign Trade, 25 by the Commissariat for Land, 23 by the Commissariat for Agriculture, and so on. It is noteworthy that, in all, 70 per cent. of the questions discussed were of an economic character. Similarly, out of the 1,178 questions that came up for discussion during the indicated period in the Sub-Council, 385 dealt with finance, 153 with questions of Soviet organisation, 180 with questions of industry, 105 with questions of labour: and so on, military, judicial, and even educational problems being overshadowed by economic problems. Thus, the Council of People's Commissaries at work is a true reflector of the life and needs of the nation at the present moment of transition. It has been called, with great truth, the "general manager" of the Soviet State.

The 30 commissions of the Council which were organised during the first four months of 1921 fall into categories which point the same moral. Seven were on industrial

questions, seven on questions of supply, four for working out points in connection with labour and compulsory labour service, two on financial questions, two on general questions (the drawing up of a draft sketch of the activity of the economic commissariats, and the organisation of a State Economic Planning Commission), and eight in connection with other questions. These commissions are thus in marked distinction from those set up under the auspices of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the functions of which, as indicated in an earlier article, are bound up first and foremost with questions of control, and then with questions of law.

The Council of People's Commissaries, therefore, is the centre at which the People's Commissariats meet for harmonising their activity, settling questions of an inter-departmental character, and working out legislation for submission to the chief legislative authorities in connection with those (principally economic) problems, the solution of which is vital to the existence of the Republic.

### III—THE COUNCIL OF LABOUR AND DEFENCE

The main task of any civilised Government, apart from the preservation of its authority, the organisation of education, and the promotion of public health, lies in the assurance of peaceful economic progress for its citizens. For the Soviet Government in particular, which came into existence pledged to achieve the complete transformation of the social order and the economic foundations existing in Russia before the November revolution, these economic tasks were necessarily of primary importance from the first. And this circumstance was only the more emphasised by the utter anarchy in production prevalent in the capitalist regime of pre-revolutionary days, and by the complete bankruptcy and breakdown brought about by the death struggles of Tsarism between 1915 and 1917. Building in this sphere, as in all others, entirely anew, without experience or any material or moral aid save its own resolution and the backing of the vast majority of the Russian workers, industrial and agricultural, the Soviet Government at the outset put before itself the bold and seemingly hopeless task of establishing a central economic authority, which should unify and co-ordinate the work of the various People's Commissariats whose activity affected the economic interests of the community, without in any way impeding their labours. It was felt that such a body should exist specifically for the purpose of drawing up and applying, through the various People's Commissariats, a general, all-Russian, economic plan of production, distribution, and commerce. Such a plan would provide for the requisite utilisation of raw materials; the necessary import of supplies from abroad; the general progress of industry; the maintenance and improvement of the transport system; the most rational utilisation of

labour-power; the development of agriculture (not merely in the sense of ensuring an adequate supply of food to the population through State or other channels, but with the object of bringing it up-to-date and ultimately of directing it on to large-scale Communist lines); the disposal abroad of surplus products and raw materials in such a manner as to produce the maximum benefit for the whole of the community; the regulation of State currency and banking; and so on.

For this purpose there was organised in 1918 the *Supreme Economic Council* (Vysshyy Soviet Narodnovo Khoziaistva), at first as a People's Commissariat, built up in the ordinary way and headed by a Chairman and Board selected by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee from amongst its members. Its first task was to take over and administer the nationalised industries as they one by one passed, from June, 1918, onwards, into the hands of the State. In this it worked as the central unit of a network of local economic councils, each built up out of a section of the local Soviet executive committee with a number of additions from trade union and technical bodies. But very clear indications were given that the future functions of the S.E.C. were to be far wider than those involved in regulating industry: at first by agreement with the other "economic Commissariats," and ultimately by absorbing them, it was to develop into that organ of universal co-ordination and national housekeeping which has already been described.

Circumstances, however, decided otherwise. The civil war which began in the spring of 1918, passing in the summer into a war of national defence against foreign aggression and invasion, for three years obliged the Soviet Government to consider the work of each Commissariat



in the light, not of its harmony with the best economic interests of the people as a whole, but of its adaptability to military requirements and the needs of a besieged fortress—as Soviet Russia felt herself to be from 1918 to 1920. Certain Commissariats (Food, Transport) developed into powerful organisations with a nation-wide scope and a sense of independence; others (Labour, Agriculture, Foreign Trade) had their vitality destroyed or their activities seriously limited from the very beginning by the conditions of war-time. The Supreme Economic Council itself found its hands more than full with the problem of adapting industry for war-time purposes and (when peace returned with the autumn of 1920) of reviving those branches which had had perforce to be allowed to fall into decline or decay. After three years of concentration on purely industrial affairs, it was no longer capable of assuming the all-embracing rôle assigned to it by the original planners of its existence. It had become to all intents and purposes the People's Commissariat for Industry.

A new organ was necessary: and such an one already existed. In April, 1920, the Council of Defence (an inter-departmental "war Cabinet" set up within the Council of People's Commissaries in November, 1918, for the express purpose of winning the war, like its counterparts in Western Europe) had been reorganised on a wider basis as the *Council of Labour and Defence* (Soviet Truda i Oborony), "with the object," in the words of the decree, "of the closest possible unification of all forces on the labour front." It was hoped that warfare was at an end, and that peaceful work was once more possible: more especially, the military formations previously at the disposal of the Council of Defence could now, it was anticipated, be

utilised in a more rational manner, in the form of "labour armies," by the same Council with a wider personnel, and thus the difficult process of demobilisation and industrial reabsorption might be passed through as painlessly as possible.

Once again sanguine hopes were thwarted, and the Polish attack, together with Wrangel's renewed activity in the south, effectively postponed all thought of peaceful revival for nearly twelve months. More than this, it was quite clear by the end of this new and (so far) conclusive chapter in the Soviet Republic's military life that the general exhaustion was then too marked to permit of the measures planned earlier in the year. Demobilisation was therefore decided upon and carried out: and the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which met in December, 1920, to consider the new situation of Soviet Russia, was placed in a position to utilise the Council of Labour and Defence for a purpose of vaster and more far-reaching import than the direction of labour armies—namely, to carry out the work of general economic unification outlined earlier in this article.

In the decree of the All-Russian Congress, the work of the Council of Labour and Defence was defined as follows:—

The C.L.D. co-ordinates and develops the activity of all departments of State in the interests of the defence of the country and of economic reconstruction.

To carry out the task imposed upon it, the C.L.D. publishes its decisions, regulations, and instructions, and takes all the measures necessary to ensure their accurate and rapid execution; in particular, it determines the single economic plan of the R.S.F.S.R., submits it for ratification by the A.R.C.E.C., directs the work of the economic People's Commissariats in accordance with this plan, supervises its application, and decides in cases of necessity on any modifications of its provisions.

The constitution of the C.L.D., which, in practice, meeting weekly, works as a Committee of the Council of People's Commissaries, and publishes minutes of its proceedings in its official daily organ *Economic Life* (*Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*), is laid down by the same decree. The chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries is chairman of the C.L.D.; its permanent members are the People's Commissaries for War, the Supreme Economic Council, Labour, 'Transport, Agriculture, Food, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection', together with a representative of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions. The director of the Central Statistical Department attends the sessions in a consultative capacity. In September, 1921, there were added representatives of the People's Commissariats for Finance and Foreign Trade.

It is of great importance to note that, while the decisions of the C.L.D. are binding on all institutions, central and local, and may be altered or set aside only by the A.R.C.E.C. or the Council of People's Commissaries, the C.L.D. has set up no apparatus of its own to carry out these decisions. They are communicated in the requisite form to the Commissariats concerned, and their execution is the work exclusively of the latter: thus unnecessary bureaucracy has been avoided. On the other hand, it has a definite and extremely energetic apparatus for assisting it in arriving at its conclusions. At the centre, in the capital, it has subordinated to it a series of thirteen or fourteen great inter-departmental commissions, which work up the material and collect the data from the appropriate People's Commissariat, each in its own delimited sphere of work, but together covering all the more pressing economic problems. The chief of these is the *State Economic Planning Commission* (Gosplan); which draws up the economic

programme for the year in all its encyclopædic variety on the basis of the reports of the People's Commissariats, and submits it to the C.L.D. for discussion and approval. Others, scarcely less prominent, but actually more specialised, are the *State Electrification Commission* (Goelro), the *Committee for Improving the Lot of the Working Class*, the *Committee for Utilisation* (which until the most recent period controlled the distribution of all the raw and partly worked-up materials of production), the *Committee for Investigating the Agricultural Conditions of the South-Eastern Region* (set up since the beginning of the famine on the Volga): and so on.

Further, the C.L.D. has at its disposal, since October, 1921, a constant and regular stream of reports from a network of local organs of similar type, set up in large numbers following a special decree of the A.R.C.E.C. of June 30, 1921. Regional "economic conferences" (*ekonomicheskoye soveshanie*)—this was the name given to the new bodies, partly to distinguish them from the old "economic councils," which are now purely industrial bodies, and partly to emphasise their super-departmental character—may be set up in any of the recently marked out economic regions or groups of provinces by special decision of the C.L.D. Provincial, county, and area (a term which includes both rural areas and the towns) economic conferences are composed of the chairmen or directors of the following departments of the appropriate local Soviet executive committee: economic council, land, food, labour, workers' and peasants' inspection, municipal affairs, statistical (with a consultative voice), and the chairman of the council of trade unions for the given territory. The chairman of the local executive committee is chairman of the conference. In rural districts (sub-divisions of counties,

which are smaller than areas) the conference is constituted by the chairman of the executive committee, the directors of the land and municipal affairs department, the chairman of the local co-operative society, and a representative of the workers' and peasants' inspection. In all these lower bodies, technical experts and representatives of other institutions are invited for consultative purposes on special questions. Finally, the lowest units of all are the village "agricultural committees" (selkom), set up by the Eighth All-Russian Congress for the express purpose of raising the level of agriculture: and, in the case of large factories which express a desire in this sense, factory economic conferences, composed of the chairman or vice-chairman of the board of management, the chairman of the workers' committee, the chairman of the local prices committee (set up in connection with the introduction of free trading under the new economic policy), and a representative of the local "group for assisting the workers' and peasants' inspection."

All these local organs, from the provincial economic conference, to the factory or village bodies, act as sub-committees, meeting weekly or fortnightly, of the Soviet executive committee for the given territory or of the Soviet of the given town or village: and are directly and entirely responsible to these bodies, forming no apparatus of their own. They thus bear exactly the same relations to these general organs of State authority as the C.L.D. itself bears to the Council of the People's Commissaries: and their tasks are defined by the decree of June, 1921, in a similar way:—

to unify and develop the activity of all local economic organs, to co-ordinate their work, and to ensure that they meet the problems dictated, not only by local interests, but also by those of the State as a whole."

In other words, in addition to providing the "economic plan" for strictly local requirements, each grade of this gigantic economic machine is charged with supervising the execution, in the territory for which it is responsible, of that section of the general State plan which affects the territory, in all its details.

It is therefore natural that each of these economic conferences should be required to render regular quarterly reports—on lines worked out and laid down by instructions from the C.L.D. itself, to cover all sides of local economic life—to the economic conference immediately above it; that is, village committees to the rural district bodies, and so on. The reports of the principal bodies are printed in a fixed number of copies, and sent, in addition to the recognised central economic bodies, to the principal libraries, universities, academies, institutes of economic research, etc., in the Republic. Other reports (rural district, village, and small town) are handed in manuscript form to the appropriate superior economic conference, and are abstracted for the central authorities by the provincial statistical departments.

In conclusion, we may refer to the figures available to illustrate the work of the Council of Labour and Defence, which show that in six months (November 1, 1920, to April 30, 1921) it examined 991 questions, 20% of which were raised by the Supreme Economic Council, 13% by the Commissariat for Food, and 12% by the War Department; while in the first four months of 1921 73 sub-commissions for special current questions (apart from the principal permanent groups mentioned earlier) were set up. No statistics are yet available of the work of the lower organs: but during the last twelve months *Economic Life* has been steadily printing abstracts of the reports of the provincial

economic conference, now coming in. These reports on the whole, in spite of many obvious defects born for the most part of inexperience, show that the general principles indicated by the C.L.D. have been correctly grasped by the local Soviet workers and economic bodies, and that a systematic effort is being made to introduce an element of co-ordination and forethought into local economic activity.

#### IV—THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

The supreme authority of the Soviet Republic in all matters is the *All-Russian Congress of Soviets*. As the soviet in each town or village—the Workers' and Soldiers' Council or the Peasants' Council—concentrates in its hands all authority in the area for which it is elected, being composed of delegates from the workers elected at their place of employment, so the All-Russian Congress, composed of delegates from all the local soviets to whom the latter have for the time being handed over their plenipotentiary powers, has full powers conferred upon it in this indirect way by the Russian working class, which alone enjoys the full rights of citizenship in the Soviet Republic.

During the four years of civil war and painful internal disorganisation in which the first eight All-Russian Congresses assembled, there was little leisure or thought for reducing this principle of election of the Congress to the most finished system. Quite apart, however, from the psychology of the revolutionary moment, which was not at all concerned with a completely accurate electoral system, a whole series of "checks and balances" existed to reassure the doubtful.

The Constitution of July, 1918, laid down (Part III, Chapter 6, Article 25) "The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is composed of representatives of town soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 25,000 electors, and representatives of provincial congresses of soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 125,000 inhabitants." This



provision has at various times given rise to a great deal of misunderstanding; but the explanation is perfectly simple, and was very clearly explained at the Fifth Congress, when the draft Constitution was being discussed, by M. Steklov, reporting on behalf of the Drafting Commission. As he pointed out at the time, the town soviets, which are themselves elected by compact groups of electors, with whom no other class of the population is intermingled, *i.e.*, the workshops, factories, trade unions, etc., naturally choose their representatives on the basis of number of electors and not number of population. In the case of the rural soviets and provincial congresses, on the other hand, where the predominating occupation is agriculture, it is much more difficult to distinguish a hard-and-fast category of electors, and still more so to assemble them in one place; and the first congresses of peasants' soviets, which met as a separate organisation in 1917, while the Provisional Government was still in power, quite naturally based their representation on the principle of one deputy for every 125,000 inhabitants. This relation took for granted that roughly one in every five of the inhabitants of the countryside was an elector (*i.e.*, the head of a household or an adult engaged all his time in production).

When the two All-Russian organisations of soviets—worker and peasant—amalgamated to form a single congress in November, 1917, they quite naturally maintained the dual system of election which practice had shown to be best adapted to the varied needs of Russia. Again, it has been made a subject of criticism that elections

to the All-Russian Congress are indirect, *i.e.*, that at best, in the towns, the constituents are two degrees distant from the body they have elected; while in the country, as the rural delegates to the provincial congresses are themselves elected by rural district congresses, the distance between the congress and the elector is doubled. Apart again from the fact that this is a feature of ordinary working-class organisations which any member of a trade union will recognise and understand, what the critics always overlooked was that the system of recall, constantly practised in the lowest units of the Soviet system, keeps them constantly in touch with the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the electors. Consequently, the special congresses which are always summoned to elect delegations to the All-Russian Congress are almost automatic in their expression of the desires of the local citizens.

The Ninth Congress which met in the last week of December, 1921, finally established as a rule of law what practical experience had already made an almost universal custom—that elections of town soviets and rural district, county, and provincial congresses should take place in future once a year, and during the month immediately preceding the assembling of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. In this way a definite step is taken to ensure, in law as well as in fact, that the All-Russian Congress shall reflect as nearly as possible—more nearly than has been possible during the first years of the Soviet Republic—the interests and points of view of the locality.

So far, nine All-Russian congresses have taken place, one of

them before the establishment of the Soviet Government. The following are the more important statistics of their composition:—

No.	Date	Communists and sympathisers	Other Parties
I	June, 1917	100	681 (297 Socialist Revolutionaries, 253 Mensheviks, 85 various Social Democrats, etc.)
II	November, 1917	390	259 (160 Socialist Revolutionaries, 72 Mensheviks)
III	January, 1918	434	276 (mostly Socialist Revolutionaries)
IV	March, 1918	732	352 (238 Left Socialist Revolutionaries, 40 Social Democrats)
V	July, 1918	868	557 (507 Left Socialist Revolutionaries & Maximalists, 28 Independents)
VI	November, 1918	900	14 (10 Socialist Revolutionaries, 3 Independents)
VII	November, 1919	970	32 (26 Independents)
VIII	December, 1920	1,614	114 (Independents)
IX	December, 1921	1,522	109 (Independents)

In addition, statistics of the Ninth Congress show that 885 of the delegates came from European Russia, 494 from the federated or allied Soviet Republics, 107 from Siberia, 54 from autonomous areas, and 76 from the Red Army.

To a certain extent the historical circumstances under which each of the congresses met determined its composition and work. The first, which met when the Soviets were still a class organisation pure and simple, with no

legal standing or authority, busied itself with such questions as the financial resources of the Central Executive Committee, the attitude to be adopted towards the Provisional Government of Kerensky, the anti-war agitation of the Bolshevik Party (which then, as we have seen above, was still in a minority in the Soviets), the land reforms to be urged on the Provisional Government, etc. The Second Congress, which met on the day following the seizure of power in Petrograd by the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, in which the majority had for two months been Bolshevik, showed that the calculations of the Bolshevik Central Committee were not unfounded, by giving a slight majority to that party. The work of this congress, therefore, consisted in laying the foundations of the Soviet State: the appointment of the Council of People's Commissaries, the decree on the land, the decree on peace, the decree ordering the formation of revolutionary committees in the army, etc.

From 1918 a curious coincidence decreed that the end of the year (and the anniversary of the November revolution) should repeatedly fall in with a temporary relaxation of the pressure on the Soviet Republic. In November, 1918, the Czecho-Slovak rising had been crushed and the first White detachments from Siberia had been driven back to the Urals, while Kolchak had only just seized power at Omsk, and did not as yet constitute a real menace. In November, 1919, Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch had been crushed in the east, south, and north-west, and General Wrangel was engaged in rallying the last remnants of the White "Volunteer" army for a desperate stand in the Crimea. In December, 1920, the menace of Wrangel and the unexpected Polish attack of the spring had

both successfully been liquidated; and the All-Russian Congress introduced into its labours that dominant economic note which in normal circumstances should be the characteristic of such an Assembly in a Socialist Republic, and which became still more accentuated at the Ninth Congress a year later. In December, 1921, there was practically no fighting to look back upon; but the stress and strain involved in the transition to the new economic policy, and the famine in the Volga provinces, had been almost as effective in preventing the earlier summons of a Congress. Once again December brought with it all the suitable circumstances for a review of the general national situation: the new economic policy could now produce its first quarterly reports, albeit incomplete and sketchy. On this occasion the Congress prudently enacted that for the immediate future, at any rate, All-Russian congresses were to meet yearly instead of every six months. With the completion of a year's more or less peaceful reconstructive work, and the prospect of some opportunity for the future of continuing that work undisturbed by external foes, there is every likelihood that the All-Russian Congress of Soviets will continue to function as the effective supreme controller of the destinies of the Russian working community of Soviet Republics.

## V—LOCAL SOVIET CONGRESSES

The area over which the machinery of Russia's local government has to be distributed is so vast that, with existing methods of communication, it would be hopeless to expect a fully representative body to remain in permanent session without losing that touch with the electorate which is considered essential in the Soviet system. The smallest unit for local government purposes above the town or village is the volost, or *rural district*, often equal in size to half an English county; the uyezd, or *county*, composed of several volosts, is frequently as large as two or three English counties; while there are gubernii, or *provinces*, as large as England.

Consequently, even before the November revolution of 1917, it was recognised that the most workable method was to hold frequent congresses of all the Soviets in the given area, which should lay down the general lines of policy to be followed for the future, and solve any important problems which the executive committees considered beyond their competence. The executive committees—provincial, county, and rural district—were small bodies of from ten to twenty-five members, elected by the congresses, and, unlike the Central Executive Committee elected by the All-Russian Congress, were limited to purely executive functions, without the right of legislation. The November revolution did not alter the essence of this system, and tended rather to reduce it to a logical form, in which local practice could be utilised for the benefit of the country at large, and local variations and departures from the general rule be brought down to a minimum. The Soviet Constitution of July, 1918, summed up the results of twelve months' working of the system of Soviet congresses, and the three and a half years which

have elapsed since that date have introduced changes of technical importance rather than of principle. In this the local apparatus, as the first four articles of this series have shown, fell behind the central apparatus of the State: but this was the natural consequence of the condition of ceaseless war—particularly of civil war—which demanded before all else a constant strengthening and bringing up to date of the central authority. The revolutionary impetus of the masses in the districts, which had thrown up the Soviets as their own peculiar form of organisation before ever it became a form of the State, was left largely to itself for long after that change had taken place. The result was that the history of Russian local government during the three years following the constitution of 1918 is a story of very gradual elimination of local differences by a process of practical testing and comparison, and of very gradual approximation to a common rule.

A quite typical example of this may be cited. The Constitution of July, 1918, laid down that provincial congresses were to consist of delegates from the rural district congresses, in the proportion of one delegate for 10,000 inhabitants, and from town Soviets on the basis of one delegate for 2,000 electors: the whole not to exceed three hundred delegates. Statistics compiled by the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs (Russia's "Local Government Board"), however, reveal the following picture:—

		CONGRESSES WITH			
		<i>Up to 100 Delegates</i>	<i>101 to 300 Delegates</i>	<i>300 to 500 Delegates</i>	<i>Over 500 Delegates</i>
1918	..	3	23	5	2
1919	..	3	29	2	1
1920	..	2	44	1	—
1921	..	—	19	—	—
(1st half)					

Thus practice showed that the maximum fixed by rule of thumb, as it were, in July, 1918, was comparatively slowly understood by all local administrative workers as binding, and not until the first half of 1921 were no exceptions recorded.

(a) *Rural District Congresses*

These are composed of delegates from all the Soviets in the district, in the proportion of one delegate for every 100 inhabitants represented in the Soviet. As this basis corresponds with that of elections to the village Soviets, it is usual to find the rural district congresses composed of (1) the regular members of all village Soviets in the district; and (2) specially elected delegates of those inhabited spots which have not a Soviet of their own, and manage their affairs by a general meeting of all the inhabitants.

It was originally intended that these congresses should meet every month, thereby approximating to the practice of county councils in other countries: but experience showed that the rural districts, which were largely artificial creations of the old regime, had not yet developed the feeling of local homogeneity necessary for such a scheme. By 1919 the People's Commissary for Home Affairs reported that congresses were taking place on an average once in three months: and after twelve months of peace had shown the urgency of practical work rather than discussion, the All-Russian Congress of December, 1921, definitely enacted that congresses would, in future, take place at intervals of twelve months, conferences of chairmen and secretaries of the village Soviets being held for consultative purposes as frequently as possible.

The highest authority in a rural district between con-



gresses is the executive committee, elected by the congress, and composed of three members, who distribute amongst themselves the various administrative functions, using a single office organisation for the purpose.

*(b) County Congresses*

The Constitution of July, 1918, betrays all the signs of the old separation of town and country which had been only very roughly bridged over by the amalgamation of the two All-Russian Congresses (workers' and peasants') which was mentioned in the last article. In the case in point, it laid down that the county congresses were to be composed of delegates from village Soviets only, in the proportion of one delegate for every 1,000 inhabitants; towns with a population of under 10,000 inhabitants being treated as villages, while others (and this category often included the county town itself) were not represented in the congress at all. As time went on, however, this distinction rapidly disappeared, the double influences of the revolution and the revolutionary war melting away and effacing the differences which originally had led to the organisation of separate town and country Soviets. The Seventh All-Russian Congress, in December, 1919, corrected this state of affairs by enacting that county congresses should be composed of delegates from *all* the Soviets in the given area, towns delegating on a basis of electorate, villages on a basis of population. The same congress recognised that the original period for the meeting of county congresses—three months—was too short for practical purposes, and extended it to six: which the Ninth Congress in December, 1921, further extended to twelve.

A few of the most important statistics relative to these

congresses are valuable for the light they throw on the various criticisms which have been directed against the Soviet system and those who administered it after the November revolution. It has been alleged, for example, that county congresses were not allowed to meet: that the majority of the rural population were not represented in them: or that they were dominated by one political party. Between January, 1918, and June, 1921, some 4,000 county congresses were held, in connection with 1,651 (40 per cent.) of which the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs is in possession of detailed statistics. In these 1,651 alone, 190,077 delegates took part: which makes it probable that in all, during these three and a half years, about 350,000 peasants (as they were for the most part) were introduced to the elements of local government on a scale larger than that of their own hamlet or village. Figures such as these are more eloquent than any reasoning when we inquire into the attachment of the Russian labouring masses to the Soviet system.

The overwhelmingly peasant character of these congresses may be shown by reference to the statistics for 1920 and the first six months of 1921, which reveal the delegates to the county congresses of those years distributed under the following categories:—

	1920 <i>Per cent.</i>	1921 <i>Per cent.</i>
Workers .. .. .	16.2	14.5
Peasants .. .. .	65.4	63.1
Employees .. .. .	13.6	16.2
Other professions .. .. .	4.8	6.2

The same lesson is to be drawn from a study of the constituencies represented. In 1920, 30,000 delegates (77.5 per cent.) were elected by rural district congresses,

and only 6,600 by towns, factory settlements, trade unions, etc. For the first half of 1921 the corresponding figures were 15,500 and 3,800

As for the assertion of a political dictatorship over the will of the peasantry, the following table will show that it was only in the most critical period of the revolution—between the middle of 1918, which saw the beginning of the civil war, and the last months of 1919, which saw the end of Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch—that the Communists and their sympathisers outnumbered the other parties and groups. The fact that the executive committees elected by the county congresses played the most decisive part in gathering Russia's gigantic Red Army, composed, as to 80 per cent. of its numbers, of peasants, shows that psychologically as well as numerically the non-party peasants were the allies and not the servants of a political faction.

	<i>Communists</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Others</i>
	<i>Per cent.</i>	<i>Per cent.</i>	<i>Per cent.</i>
Jan.-June, 1918.. ..	48.4	32.1	19.5
July-Dec., 1918.. ..	72.8	18.3	8.9
Jan.-June, 1919.. ..	61.3	33.8	4.9
July-Dec., 1919.. ..	49.4	45.6	5.0
Jan.-Dec., 1920.. ..	43.0	56.3	0.7
Jan.-June, 1921.. ..	41.5	58.3	0.2

As in the case of rural district congresses, the county congresses elect executive committees, numbering not more than 11 (since March, 1922) and meeting fortnightly. The committees have attached to them a number of departments for carrying on public business—administration, war, labour, education, finance, agriculture, food, health, and municipal.

### (c) *Provincial Congresses*

These assemblies, composed of delegates from towns on the basis of electorate (1: 2,000) and from rural district congresses on the basis of population (1: to 10,000)—or from county congresses on the same basis, if these be held immediately before the provincial congress—are distinguished by much the same features as were noticed in the case of the county congresses. During the first two years of the revolution, they were held, roughly, once in six months: later this period began to be extended, until it was fixed by the Ninth Congress at twelve months. Affecting, as they do, the administration of vast areas, the efficient government of which is of primary importance from the economic or military point of view, where smaller territorial units can be left more safely as a field of experience for purely local initiative, the provincial congresses show a more even balance between town and country representatives, and consequently between workers' and peasants' representation: the most capable administrators naturally being produced by the large industrial centres, which we find taking part in Soviet congresses for the first time at this stage of the administrative ladder. The following table shows the distribution of delegates according to principal constituencies represented:—

	1920	1921 (6 mths)
County Congresses .. ..	4,252	1,980
Rural District Congresses .. ..	278	106
Town & Factory Soviets .. ..	1,053	409

The following table applies to the same congresses, the delegates being distributed according to professions:—

	1920 <i>Per cent.</i>	1921 <i>Per cent.</i>
Workers .. ..	33.3	31.2
Peasants .. ..	36.7	35.9
Employees .. ..	17.4	23.0
Other professions .. ..	12.3	9.9

It may be noticed that here, as in the case of the county congresses, the percentage of Soviet employees amongst the delegates has increased since the coming of peace. It is natural, of course, that the demobilisation of the army, the return of several millions of men to more normal pursuits, and the possibility of developing local administrative apparatus more extensively and usefully than could be the case in the years when the war was the first public concern, should bring about an increase in the number of active local workers who are engaged in purely administrative occupations. Of the same order is the fact that the percentage of communists delegated to provincial congresses has steadily decreased from 90.3 in July–December, 1918, to 74.7 in January–June, 1921: while the percentage of independents has just as steadily increased from 5.7 to 25.1.

This, together with the circumstance that, between the November revolution and June, 1921, over 50,000 delegates had taken part in provincial congresses, once again serves to emphasise the fact that the Soviet system, besides being a form of local government on which the Russian Republic has been able to exist amidst difficulties which no other less flexible form would have enabled it to outlive, is in addition a gigantic political school, an unprecedented training ground in public affairs, for the Russian working and peasant masses.

The provincial congresses elect executive committees (of not more than 25 members, as a rule), which carry out their work through a number of departments, corresponding to the various People's Commissariats.

## VI—TOWN SOVIETS

"We find that if only fifteen to twenty men take part in administration, they must against their own will become bureaucrats—however much they speak against bureaucracy. The wide participation in administration of the workers themselves is imperative." In these sentences M. Kameneff, reporting at the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in December, 1919, on the proposed amendments to the Constitution, summed up the fundamental principles upon which the Russian Soviet system is built, and which are most clearly to be seen at work in the lowest units or cells of the Soviet machinery—the local Soviets.

Of the distinguishing features which are associated with Soviet practice in Russia since the revolution, the following are the most important. In the first place, the Soviet system as such is in its origin an *industrial* system. It is the method of self-expression adopted by the masses of the Russian workers where their consciousness of solidarity was highest, and where the feeling that their interests were sharply antagonistic to those of all other classes was most acute. Soviets could not spring up spontaneously in the Russian countryside, where the primitive conditions of agriculture themselves rendered man an individualist, difficult to organise, and with little political consciousness. Similarly in the smaller provincial towns, where the population consists of small farmers, shopkeepers, and their assistants, office employees, and petty artisans, there was no strong coherent force amongst the mass of the workers to make their participation in the class struggle so advanced that it could produce an entirely new political organism like the Soviets. It was in large industrial centres—Moscow, Petrograd, Tula, Ivanovo-Voznesensk—with their compact and politically intelligent masses of factory workers,

that the need for an independent working class political organisation first made itself felt, during the general strike of 1905 and at the moment of the February revolution in 1917. The example of the capitals was rapidly followed by the provincial and county towns, and these in their turn, during the summer of 1917, served to waken the countryside into political activity. We have already seen that this difference in time between the organisation of town and country Soviets gave rise to the existence of separate All-Russian organisations, and later to a difference in electoral methods when delegates to Soviet congresses were being selected.

Secondly, the Soviets—Councils of Workers' Deputies—were in their origin fighting rather than governmental organisations, and consequently their composition, methods of election, regulations, methods of work, etc., are only gradually being elaborated, in proportion as the Russian working class passes from a state of perpetual siege conditions, in which work rather than form is demanded of public institutions, to a state of political quietness and mastery in its own home, when it is able to find time for more elaborate rules of procedure. This original feature of the Soviets is brought out still more strongly when we recall that the Russian working class had no other form of combination at its disposal when Tsarism fell. Even the political parties were underground propagandist organisations, which at best could only for a time, at moments of a particularly intense crisis, assume the direct leadership of mass movements—as in the Petrograd strikes of 1895–6. No trade union movement existed in Russia, for all practical purposes, before the February revolution in 1917; and this fact was of enormous importance. Had it been otherwise, it is very possible that the workers would have asked for no

better protection of their interests than a powerful all embracing trade union congress. As it was, the political parties, both in 1905 and in 1917, were accustomed, owing to the illegal nature of their work, to carry it on primarily in the workshop and not in the trade union club or at the street corner; and they naturally urged the workers to elect a body for general political purposes which should be responsive to the tangible and ever-present workshop, rather than to the intangible electoral district or the still only rudimentary trade unions.

This brings us to the third important characteristic of the Russian Soviets—their form of election—which ensures their constant and intimate contact with the working classes. In every Soviet there are a few deputies from trade unions, political parties, the local garrison, etc., but the bulk are elected in the workshops, commercial or educational establishments, large depôts or stores, etc. For every 200 employees (the number was lowered from 500 in March, 1922) one deputy is elected, workers in enterprises with less than a hundred employees uniting for electoral purposes with the workers of other small enterprises. Where the workers are scattered, as in the case of shop assistants, teachers in small schools, literary and art workers, they are assembled at special electoral meetings by their trade union; while assemblies of housewives, domestic workers, janitors, etc., convened ward by ward, take part in the elections on a similar basis. Thanks to this system, to take a concrete example, there participated in the Petrograd elections:—

In July, 1919	..	..	..	..	330,000	workers
In January, 1920	..	..	..	..	501,000	„
In June, 1920	..	..	..	..	562,000	„



or practically the entire adult population (253,000 workers in factories, depôts, hospitals, etc., 142,000 Soviet employees, 114,000 Red soldiers and sailors, 47,000 housewives, and 5,000 students). A similar proportion of the classes participating is shown (selecting at random) by the statistics of the first elections to the Soviet of Rostov-on-Don, in February, 1921, after the liberation of the town from the yoke of Denikin: 94,000 workers and employees, 30,000 Red soldiers, 14,000 peasants, and 2,000 housewives.

Not only does the method of election of the Soviets retain and even extend the franchise for the widest circles of the population, but by drawing them into contact with the administrative apparatus at the place or in the building where they are employed for the greater part of their lives, it makes the Russian administrative apparatus, as has already been suggested, a much more popular and flexible system than any of its predecessors. The deputy from any given factory or workshop is constantly under the control of and liable to be replaced by his electorate, to whom he renders periodical reports (in Moscow, for example, out of a Soviet of 1,000-1,500, there were 423 such cases of recall in 1918, and 411 in 1919). According to regulations adopted in March, 1922, the town Soviets must exclude any deputy whose recall has been demanded by the majority of his constituents, or who fails to make regular reports to the electors. Within the Soviet itself, the deputy is not allowed to confine himself to the hearing of reports by the Executive Committee at the monthly meetings of the Soviet, or the making of them to his constituents: he must participate in the daily work of the administrative apparatus, in some capacity or other to prevent his transformation into a "legislator," pure and simple, in just the same way as his

frequent contact with a definite mass of electorate is designed to prevent him from becoming transformed into a "departmental official," pure and simple. So strongly was this felt, particularly during the period of the civil war, when above all it was essential to have in the districts public bodies with energy, resource, and contact with real life, that (the case was quoted by the People's Commissary for Home Affairs in a lecture at the Sverdlov University) the provincial executive committee of Vladimir, in July, 1919 (the beginning of the Denikin offensive), found it necessary to dissolve all the town Soviets of the province. The electorate in these towns was for the most part composed of traders, peasants, and shopkeepers, and the Soviets had actually been elected by universal suffrage: with the result that they had fallen into a state of complete quiescence, leaving all administrative work to be carried on by the county executive committees.

In the larger towns, from 1920 onwards, the practice was adopted of appointing committees of the Soviet, into one of which every member must enter: and, although under civil war conditions only certain of the committees showed real vitality (the position may be compared to that of the People's Commissariats on the national scale), there can be no doubt that the institution of these committees has also done a great deal towards making the Soviets a working and not a talking institution. This is shown indirectly by the fact that, in March, 1920, the regulations of the Moscow Soviet—which in many ways, as might be expected, is the prototype of thousands of similar bodies elsewhere—laid down that all members were *ipso facto* members of the Soviets of their wards. By February, 1922, the process of drawing each individual member into general municipal work, in addition to his sessional duties, had advanced so

considerably that, at all of the several hundred electoral meetings which were reported in the Press during the Moscow Soviet elections of February, 1922, the assembled workers, having elected a deputy to the Soviet, proceeded to choose others of their number for the ward councils. This circumstance, in its turn, brings us to another interesting characteristic of the Soviet system, which we have already seen strongly marked in the case of the congresses—the constant influx of new blood into the administrative apparatus, with once again the result that little by little that apparatus becomes part of the everyday experience of the most average worker. Statistics, unfortunately, are not as readily available as in the case of the Soviet congresses. It is known, however, that at the Petrograd Soviet elections in July, 1919, 1,570 members out of 1,836 were elected for the first time: at the elections in July, 1920, out of a total of 2,214 elected, one half were new members; and that in all over 20,000 workers and employees passed through what M. Zinoviev has called the “gigantic political laboratory” of the Petrograd Soviet in three years.

As a symbol of the cardinal feature of the Soviet system—its dependence upon and closeness to the masses of the Russian working people—we may cite the fact that, following the excellent example set by Petrograd in 1920, most of the principal industrial centres have adopted the practice of holding periodical sessions of the executive committees of their Soviets in one or other of the most important factories of the city, the workers being allowed to make their observations in the course of the discussion on the departmental reports submitted. In addition, regulations for town Soviets adopted in March, 1922, lay down that members of committees of the local Soviets have the right

of admission to the offices of the department with which their committee is connected, including the office of the manager himself.

The following tables of election statistics at the two capitals during the last few years bring out two facts of importance: the ever-growing influence of the Communist Party with the Russian factory proletariat, and the increasing proportion of workers whom the Soviet system "draws out," not as adherents of this or that party, but as adherents of the Soviet system itself, interested in making it an efficient governmental apparatus for the benefit of the Russian working class.

	<i>Bolsheviks and Sympathisers</i>	<i>Mensheviks and Sympathisers</i>	<i>Soc.-Rev. and Sympathisers</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Anarchists</i>	<i>Others</i>
<b>MOSCOW</b>						
April, 1918 .. ..	504	88	51	9	5	66
March, 1920 .. ..	1,368	46	—	145	1	1
February, 1922 .. ..	1,447	3	1	207*	1	—
<b>PETROGRAD</b>						
July, 1919 .. ..	1,249	—	1	338	—	248
December, 1919 .. ..	1,607	5	11	252	—	—
May, 1920 .. ..	1,503	13	2	402	4	—
July, 1920 .. ..	1,727	5	17	469	2	—

## VII—VILLAGE SOVIETS

The village Soviets constitute the second class of what we have called the lowest units or cells of the Soviet organism. While the town Soviets are relatively complex in character, thanks to the conditions under which they have to carry out their fundamental task—that of drawing the working masses into the everyday business of government and administration—the village Soviets for the same reason are comparatively simple in their construction and working. At the very beginning of their existence, as has been noted, the primitive condition of agriculture determined that they should arise only after the first months of the Revolution, on the initiative of the towns. The same factor may be seen at work throughout their history since 1917. The number of village Soviets actually in existence as compared with the number of populated areas, the variation in their basis of representation, the amount of responsibility conferred upon them, and their methods of work—all bear the stamp of the fact that the bulk of the population of Russia was composed of peasants of varying degrees of wealth, most of them with strong individualist instincts, bound hand and foot by an undeveloped system of agriculture, and entirely unaccustomed to any form of effective self-government.

From the first, for example, the lack of financial independence to any degree whatsoever, as well as the lack of any organised local life, made itself felt in the constant tendency to reduce the number of village Soviets, owing to the lack of resources wherewith to pay their full-time officials, and to the consequent control of the Soviets by undesirable elements who paralysed them as organs of local government. Naturally, at a time of civil and foreign war, this frequently involved drastic measures. Thus it was reported

to the All-Russian Congress, in December, 1919, that, during the course of that year, the provincial authorities in Yaroslavl, Vitebsk and elsewhere had amalgamated groups of villages within their province into "areas," for the purpose of electing a single Soviet, and thus of avoiding the expenses of, perhaps, six or eight chairmen's salaries. In 1920 this practice became extended to the whole Republic by an enactment of the A.R.C.E.C., which amended the clause in the Soviet Constitution dealing with village Soviets in such a way that Soviets were to be formed in future only where villages had a population of 300 or over, smaller villages being directed to combine for electoral purposes. Again, the chairman of the administrative department of the Tiumen provincial executive committee reported in October, 1920 (*Vlast Sovietov*) that arrears in the salaries of village chairmen had had a bad effect upon the social composition of this grade of official, as only the more well-to-do elements tended to be elected. With their class instincts urging them against the execution of the instructions which came from higher authorities (mostly of an urgent character, as the evil effects of the Kolchak régime in Siberia were still in a process of liquidation), they sought, on every occasion of the arrival of a decree or instruction, to take the opinion of the village meeting, relying upon their economic position to assist them in securing the decisions which they wished. The normal life of the village was thus being constantly interrupted by futile meetings. An official of the Commissariat for Home Affairs, writing to *Pravda* in December of the same year, draws a similar picture of conditions in the Moscow province, and suggests that, instead of having fifty-three lifeless village Soviets, it would be better to amalgamate them into fifteen or twenty strong "area" Soviets, with sub-commissions to cover every

branch of local activity, to which the most active workers could be co-opted.

Regulations issued in March, 1922, in execution of the decisions of the Ninth<sup>th</sup> All-Russian Congress, show that this process must have been checked by the end of the civil war in 1920, and by the return during the following year of many hundreds of thousands of peasant soldiers to their homes, bringing a wave of new ideas and new energies. The new regulations, however, are more cautious than the old, and lay down 400 as the minimum number of inhabitants requisite to entitle a village to its own Soviet: while they raise the basis of representation from 1 for every 100 inhabitants to 1 for every 200—a measure which reflects the countryside's need for concentration on the revival of agriculture rather than on administrative matters. The same regulations lay down that full Soviet meetings are to take place not less than once a fortnight, instead of twice a week as the Constitution provided. Re-elections take place annually, instead of once every three months, as was the practice during the first year (1917–1918), when a feverish attempt was being made to waken the countryside to conscious political existence. But, as M. Vladimirsky observes (writing in 1920), as early as 1919 studies of the returns made by rural district (volost) authorities in seven provinces between January and August revealed that, in 273 out of 283 districts, village Soviets were being re-elected once every six months only. The constitution of the village executive organ has undergone modification in the same direction, under the influence, first of the civil war and the blockade, and then of the straitened economic circumstances of the countryside. In July, 1918, its maximum size was fixed at five, all the members receiving salaries out of State funds. By February, 1920, a revision had become necessary, and

the maximum was reduced to three; with the provision that, in villages with a population of under 10,000, all executive functions, in connection with current work of the Soviet or with urgent instructions from higher bodies, devolved upon the chairman, whose salary, paid out of State funds, was fixed at 25% less than that of corresponding officials of the rural district executives. The regulations of March, 1922, reduce the possible number of executive members to two, and, in accordance with the principles of the new economic policy, make the salary of the chairman a charge upon local (provincial) funds.

The functions and obligations of the village Soviet, which in the Constitution of 1918 (Chapter 12, Article 61) were defined in a few short phrases, were expanded in a much more ambitious form in the regulations of February, 1920. These were published at a time (immediately after the defeat of Kolchak and before the renewed attack of Wrangel and the Poles) when it was hoped that peaceful economic reconstruction was once more possible: and they enter with great detail into the duties of the village Soviets in every sphere. The regulations of March, 1922, definitely superseding the former provisions in many ways, in this respect confine themselves to restating the bare general lines of work of the village Soviets, which, in the 1920 regulations (Article 13), prefaced a carefully worked-out list of duties. The poverty of the Republic and of the countryside, and the necessity of shifting local financial burdens on to the shoulders of the local authorities—a characteristic feature of the new economic policy—are directly reflected in this more cautious step. Within the limits of the general constitutional framework, and providing the basic principles of the Soviet system are not infringed—particularly where electoral rights are con-



cerned—the village Soviet is now “the supreme organ of authority within its own competence, and within the boundaries of the locality it serves,” in a much more real and concrete sense than before.

The village Soviets can only attain the same regularity of working and complexity of duties as the town Soviets when Russian agriculture at last emerges from its present struggle for existence, and takes its place beside the other industries as a large-scale and properly-equipped occupation—*i.e.*, when the workers engaged in agriculture have been shaped by the very conditions of their labour into fully educated and trained citizens, with a high standard of comfort. Even at present, however, the village Soviets represent a gigantic step forward in self-government and *self-administration*, compared with any system previously prevailing in Russia or, indeed, anywhere else in the world. And, as we have seen, they offer a peculiarly vivid example of the remarkable *elasticity* of the Soviet system, which, unlike other governmental forms, never petrifies into a rigid machinery entirely out of touch with the political or the economic requirements of the society for whose ends it exists.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There has been little time up to this stage in the history of the Soviet Republic for the close study of the Soviet system, and much valuable material still remains scattered in the files of the local papers, particularly the Moscow and Petrograd press (*Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Krasnaya Gazeta*). The stenographic reports of the sessions of the Moscow and Petrograd Soviets are another periodical source of information, usually containing a detailed analysis of election figures after every periodical re-election of the Soviet. The year-books published by many provincial authorities occasionally contain valuable local statistics and other information. Only those of the Black Sea regional and Ivanovo-Voznesensk provincial executive committees have come to our notice, however.

Regular statistical information, local correspondence, and general articles dealing with various parts of the machinery of government may be found in *Vlast Sovietov* (*The Soviet Power*), the monthly organ of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs. The latter Department, in 1920, also published the first collection of detailed statistics, entitled "Soviety, Ispolkomy, i Siezdy Sovietov" ("Soviets, Executives, and Soviet Congresses"). The volume was revised and considerably supplemented in its second edition (1921).

The chief non-periodical source of information is "Organizatsia Sovetskoi Vlasti Na Mestakh" ("The Local Organisation of the Soviet Power"), by M. Vladimirsky (1920, and again 1921). M. Vladimirsky is Assistant People's Commissary for Home Affairs, and has had access to all the local reports and archives of the Commissariat. His work is based upon a careful study of these, and refers to them at

every turn. At the same time, being in its origin the substance of a series of lectures delivered to the Sverdlov University in Moscow, it maintains throughout the requisite balance between general principles and illustrative material. A chapter is devoted to each of the following subjects: the general principles and construction of the Soviet Power, village Soviets and executives, Soviets of settlements, town Soviets, rural district congresses and executives, county and provincial congresses, executive committees and their presidiums, departments of executive committees, revolutionary committees, points of contact between the administrative machinery and the masses, and the relations between central and local organs.

The general theory of the Soviet system was discussed at the Fifth All-Russian Soviet Congress (July, 1918), in the debates on the Constitution, and at the Seventh Congress (December, 1919), in connection with M. Kameneff's report on "The Centre and the Districts," which was republished later as a separate pamphlet. The stenographic reports of these Congresses, published by the State Publishing Agency, should be consulted. Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Trotsky's *Terrorism and Communism* touch upon the subject in several passages. It may be expected that *Sovietskoye Pravo* (*Soviet Law*), a review published by the Institute of Soviet Law, the first number of which appeared in May, 1922, will continue to print theoretical studies of the Soviet Constitution from the standpoint of scientific Marxian jurisprudence. The essay in No. 1, entitled "Soviet Narodnykh Komissarov" ("The Council of People's Commissaries"), by V. Durdenevsky, may be mentioned in particular, as a valuable study of the functions of the Soviet Cabinet and of its constitutional position as

compared with the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

There is little relevant material in English. The best general outline of the Constitution is given in R. W. Postgate's *The Bolshevik Theory*; a detailed study of how a city Soviet is elected may be found in a leaflet published under that title by the People's Russian Information Bureau in 1919. The *Russian Press Review*, published in Russia between 1920 and 1921, often contained useful statistical notes translated from the Moscow press.



## Appendix

# THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS



## THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS

As the result of a series of resolutions adopted by the Soviet Congresses of various Federal Republics—Trans-Caucasia, Ukraine, White Russia, and the R.S.F.S.R., a Congress of Union was held in Moscow on December 30, 1922, at which the two resolutions quoted hereunder were adopted. It will be seen that the motives which prompted the Declaration of Union were both political and economic.

### DECLARATION OF UNION

Since the formation of the Soviet Republics the world has been divided into two camps—the capitalist and the Socialist.

In the capitalist camp reigns national hostility and inequality, colonial slavery, chauvinism, national suppression, pogroms, and imperialist brutality.

Here, in the Socialist camp, is to be found mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, and the tranquil community and fraternal co-operation of peoples. The attempt of the capitalist world through long decades to settle the problem of nationalities by the joint methods of the free development of peoples and the exploitation of man by man, has proved to be fruitless. On the contrary, the skein of nationalist contradictions is becoming more and more entangled, and threatens to overwhelm capitalism itself. The bourgeoisie have proved incapable of bringing about the co-operation of nations.

Only in the camp of the Soviets, and under the proletarian dictatorship round which is rallied the majority of the population, has it been found possible to root out national persecution, to create conditions for mutual trust, and to lay



the foundations of fraternal co-operation. Thanks solely to this fact were the Soviet Republics able to beat off the internal and external attacks of world imperialism, to bring the civil war to a successful conclusion, to render their existence safe and sure, and to proceed to the work of peaceful economic construction.

But the years of war were not without their heritage. The ruined fields and idle factories, the breakdown of production and the exhaustion of economic resources which follow from the war, render the isolated efforts of the separate Republics towards economic reconstruction inadequate. The revival of the economic life of the country has proved impossible as long as the Republics lead a divided existence. Furthermore, the unsettled state of international relations, and the danger of new attacks render imperative the creation of a common front by the Soviet Republics against a capitalist encirclement.

Finally, the very structure of the Soviet power, which is international in its class character, urges the working masses of the Soviet Republics along the path of union into one Socialist family.

All these considerations imperatively demand the union of the Soviet Republics into a single State, powerful enough to ensure internal economic prosperity, security from foreign attacks, and the free development of her peoples according to their nationality.

The will of the peoples of the Soviet Republics, expressed in the recent Congresses of their Soviets, which unanimously adopted the decision to create a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, is a reliable guarantee that the Union is a voluntary union of equal peoples, that entry into the Union is open to all Socialist Soviet Republics, either already in

existence or to be formed in the future, that the new united State is a fitting consummation to the peaceful Communism and fraternal co-operation of peoples begun in October, 1917, that it will form a firm bulwark against world capitalism, and will be a decided step towards the union of the workers of all countries into a World Socialist Soviet Republic.

Declaring this to the whole world, and affirming the unshakable foundations of the Soviet power as expressed in the constitutions of the Socialist Soviet Republics in whose name we are empowered to act, we, the delegates of these Republics, acting within the scope of the powers conferred upon us, resolve to put our signatures to the Treaty for the creation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

### THE TREATY OF UNION

The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (U.S.S.R.), the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (W.R.S.S.R.), and the Trans-Caucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia), hereby conclude a treaty for their union into a single united State, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, on the following basis:—

- 1 The competence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, exercised by its supreme organs, shall include:—
  - (i) Representation of the Union in international relations.
  - (ii) Alteration of the frontiers of the Union.
  - (iii) Conclusion of treaties for the acceptance of new republics into the Union.
  - (iv) Declaration of war and conclusion of peace.
  - (v) Floating of foreign State loans.

- (vi) Ratification of international treaties.
- (vii) Establishment of regulations for internal and external trade.
- (viii) Establishment of the general plan, and regulation, of the national economy of the Union, and the conclusion of concessionary agreements.
- (ix) Regulation of transport and posts and telegraphs.
- (x) Organisation of armed forces of the Union.
- (xi) Ratification of the Union State budget; establishment of currency and credit systems, and of taxation systems for the Union, the Republics, and the localities.
- (xii) Establishment of the general principles of land distribution and exploitation, and of the exploitation of the mineral wealth, forests, and waterways throughout the whole territory of the Union.
- (xiii) Union legislation on migration and settlement.
- (xiv) Establishment of the principles of court structure and procedure, and also civil and criminal legislation for the Union.
- (xv) Fundamental labour legislation.
- (xvi) Establishment of general principles of national education.
- (xvii) Adoption of general measures of national health protection.
- (xviii) Establishment of systems of weights and measures.
- (xix) Organisation of Union statistics.
- (xx) General legislation as to the civil rights of foreigners.
- (xxi) General amnesty regulations.
- (xxii) Veto of any decisions of Soviet Congresses, Central Executive Committees, and Councils of People's Commissaries of the republics of the Union, which infringe the Treaty of Union.

## THE UNION CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

2 The supreme authority of the Union shall be the Congress of Soviets of the Union, and, between congresses, the Union Central Executive Committee.

3 The Union Congress of Soviets shall be composed of representatives of the town Soviets in the proportion of one delegate for every 25,000 electors, and of representatives of the provincial Congresses of Soviets on the basis of one delegate for every 125,000 inhabitants.

4 The delegates to the Union Congress of Soviets shall be elected at the provincial Congresses of Soviets.

5 Ordinary Union Soviet Congresses shall be summoned by the Union Central Executive Committee once a year; extraordinary Congresses shall be summoned by the Union Central Executive Committee either upon its own initiative or on the demand of at least two of the constituent republics.

## THE UNION CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6 The Union Congress of Soviets elects the Central Executive Committee, consisting of representatives of the united republics, in proportion to the population of each, to the total number of 371 members.

7 Ordinary sessions of the Union Central Executive Committee shall be held three times a year; extraordinary sessions shall be summoned by resolution of the Presidium of the Union Central Executive Committee or upon the demand of the Union Council of People's Commissaries or of the Central Executive Committee of one of the constituent republics.

8 The Union Congresses of Soviets and sessions of the Central Executive Committee shall meet in the capitals of the constituent republics in turn, in an order to be established by the Presidium of the Union Central Executive Committee.

9 The Union Central Executive Committee shall elect a Presidium, which shall be the supreme authority in the Union in the intervals between the sessions of the Union Central Executive Committee.

10 The Presidium of the Union Central Executive Committee shall consist of nineteen members, four of whom, one for each of the republics, shall be appointed by the Union Central Executive Committee as its chairmen.

#### THE UNION COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIES

11 The Executive organ of the Union Central Executive Committee shall be the Union Council of People's Commissaries, consisting of:—

The Chairman of the Union Council of People's Commissaries.

The Vice-Chairman of the Union Council of People's Commissaries.

The People's Commissary for Foreign Affairs.

„ „ „ „ War (and Marine).

„ „ „ „ Foreign Trade.

„ „ „ „ Transport.

„ „ „ „ Posts and Telegraphs.

„ „ „ „ Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

„ „ „ „ Labour.

„ „ „ „ Food.

„ „ „ „ Finance.

The Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council.

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

12 For the purposes of ratifying revolutionary legislation on the territory of the Union, and for co-ordinating the activities of the united republics in the struggle against counter-revolution, there shall be established in the Union

Central Executive Committee a Supreme Court, with the functions of a supreme body for court control, and in the Council of People's Commissaries a section of the State Political Department, the chairman of which shall participate in the Union Council of People's Commissaries in an advisory capacity.

13 The decrees and orders of the Union Council of People's Commissaries shall be binding upon all the united republics and shall be carried out throughout the territory of the Union:

14 The decrees and orders of the Union Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissaries shall be printed in the languages of the united republics (Russian, Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish).

15 The Central Executive Committees of the united republics may lodge protests against the decrees and orders of the Union Council of People's Commissaries with the Presidium of the Union Central Executive Committee, but must not suspend their execution.

16 The decrees and orders of the Union Council of People's Commissaries may be set aside only by the Union Central Executive Committee and its Presidium. The acts of the Councils of People's Commissaries of the individual republics may be set aside by the Union Central Executive Committee, its Presidium, and the Union Council of People's Commissaries.

17 The execution of Orders issued by the People's Commissaries of the Union may be suspended by the Central Executive Committees of the united republics, or their presidia, only when they do not correspond with the decisions of the Union Council of People's Commissaries

or Central Executive Committee. In such cases the Central Executive Committee of the united republic, or its Presidium, shall immediately inform the Union Council of People's Commissaries and the appropriate Union People's Commissary.

18 The Council of People's Commissaries of each of the united republics shall consist of:—

The Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council.

The People's Commissary for Agriculture.

„	„	„	„	Food.
„	„	„	„	Finance.
„	„	„	„	Labour.
„	„	„	„	Home Affairs.
„	„	„	„	Justice.
„	„	„	„	Workers' and Peasants' In- spection.
„	„	„	„	Education.
„	„	„	„	Health.
„	„	„	„	Social Welfare.
„	„	„	„	Nationalities.

and, in a consultative capacity, the representatives of the Union Commissariats for Foreign Affairs, War, Foreign Trade, Transport, and Post and Telegraphs.

19 The Supreme Economic Council and the People's Commissariats for Food, Finance, Labour, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the united republics shall be immediately subordinated to the Central Executive Committees and the Councils of People's Commissaries of the united republics, but shall be guided by the instructions of the appropriate Union People's Commissaries.

20 The republics entering into the Union shall have their

own budgets, which shall form an integral part of the general Union budget, and shall be approved by the Union Central Executive Committee. The revenue and expenditure sides of the budgets of the republics shall be drawn up by the Union Central Executive Committee. The list of revenues, and the amount of each, forming part of the budgets of the united republics, shall be determined by the Union Central Executive Committee.

21 A uniform civilian status shall apply to all citizens of the united republics.

22 The Union shall have its own flag, coat of arms, and State seal.

23 The capital of the Union shall be Moscow.

24 The united republics shall modify their constitutions as required by the present treaty.

25 The Union Congress of Soviets is the only competent body for the ratification of, alteration or addition to, the Treaty of Union.

26 Each of the united republics retains its full liberty to leave the Union if it so desires.

Moscow, December 30, 1922.





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